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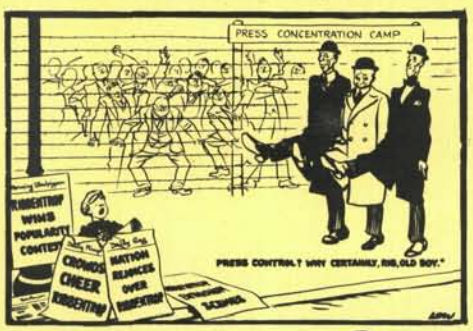
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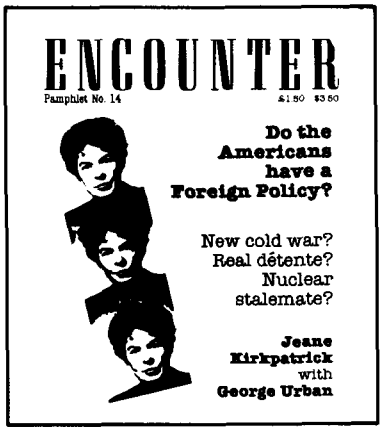

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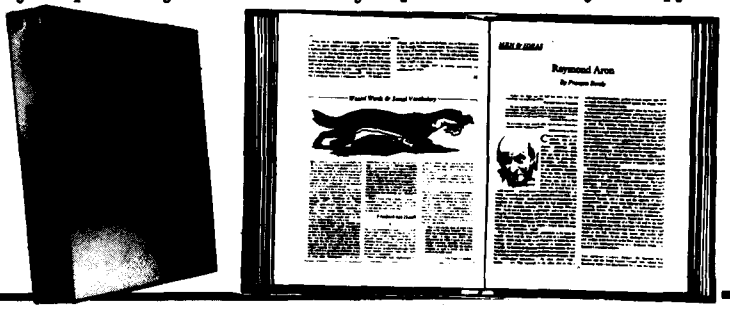

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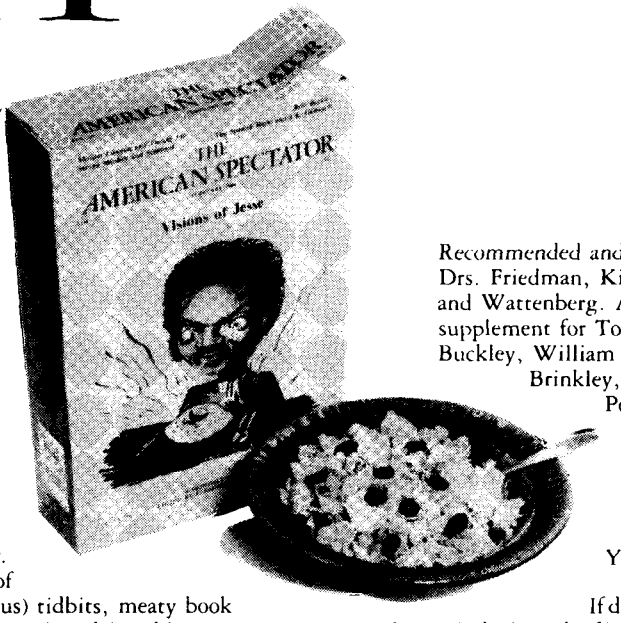

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Norman Levine

Django, Karfunkelstein, & Roses

IN LATE OCTOBER, on the morning of my fiftieth birthday, we had breakfast early—my wife and three daughters. On the plain wooden table: a black comb, a half-bottle of brandy, a red box of matches from Belgium, a felt pen, a couple of Dutch cigars, a card of Pissarro's *Lower Norwood under snow*, and a record. They wished me Happy Birthday. And we kissed.

After breakfast the children went to school. We continued to talk, without having to finish sentences, over another cup of coffee. Then my wife went to make the beds, water the plants, do the washing. And I went to the front room, lit the coal-fire, smoked a Dutch cigar, drank some of the brandy, put the record on, listened to Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli—The Hot Club of France. And looked out for the postman.

The mimosa tree was still in bloom in the small front garden as were some roses. To the left, a road of terraced houses curved as it sloped down to the church steeple and the small shops. And at the end of the road—above houses, steeple, shops—was the white-blue water of the bay.

Directly opposite, past the garden and across the road, was Wesley Street. A short narrow street of stone cottages. I watched the milkman leave bottles on the granite by the front doors. Mr Veal—a tall man with glasses, a retired carpenter, a Plymouth brother ("I have my place up there when I die", he told me pointing to the sky)—came out of his cottage holding a white table-cloth. He shook the table-cloth in the street. From the slate roofs, the red chimney-pots, came jackdaws, sparrows, and a few gulls. They were waiting for him. Mr Veal swirled the table-cloth—as if it was a cape—and over his shoulder it folded neatly on his back. He stood in the centre of the street with the white table-cloth on his back, the birds near his feet. ("I need to get wax out of my ears", he said when we were talking. "I don't hear people—but I hear the birds.") Then he went inside.

The postman appeared and walked past the house. This morning it didn't matter. My wife hung the washing in the courtyard and pulled up the line. Then left the house to buy the food for the day. The sun came through the coloured glass of the inside front door and on to the floor in shafts of soft yellow, blue, and red. I went upstairs to the large attic room. And got on with the new story. . . .

WITHIN A FEW YEARS this life changed. And for my wife it ended. The children left home. I would get up early—the gulls woke me—wondering what to do. (I wasn't writing anything.) Living by oneself like this, I thought, how long the day is. How slow it goes by. I went from one empty room to another . . . looked outside . . . such a nice-looking place . . . and wondered how to go on. And there were times when I wondered why go on?

Then a letter came from Zurich. It came from the people who worked in a literary agency. They told me that my literary agent was going to be seventy. They were planning a surprise party. Could I come?

At the airport a young man with curly brown hair and glasses, just over medium height, was holding a sheet of paper with my name on it. He was shy. (No, he hadn't been waiting long.) He smiled easily. He said he did the accounts.

"You have not met Ruth?"

"No", I said.

"How long is she your agent?"

"Fourteen years."

Zurich was busy. In sunny end-of-May weather he drove to the heights above . . . to a cul-de-sac of large houses. They had signs, *Achtung Hund* . . . except in front of the large house where he stopped.

As he opened the door there were red roses, in the hallway, lots of them. And more red roses at the bottom of the wide stairs. The wall opposite the front door was mostly books. But in a space, waist-high, a small sink with the head of a brass lion. Water came out of its mouth. There were more roses, as well as books, in the large carpeted rooms that he led me through. Then outside, down a few steps, to a grass lawn.

People were standing in clusters talking and eating. A tall, attractive woman with straight blonde hair was cooking over a barbecue. She talked loudly in Italian. A man in his thirties—regular clean-cut face, black curly hair—was moving around slowly with a hand-held camera, stopping, then moving again.

The person at the airport came towards me with a lively short woman. She looked very alert, intelligent, and with a sense of fun.

"What a surprise", she said. We embraced quickly and kissed. Then we moved apart and looked at one another.

"This is very moving", she said quietly.

I could hear the whirr of the film camera.

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"You must be hungry."

She linked arms, led me to the barbecue, and introduced me to Giuli—the tall, blonde Italian who was her housekeeper. (She would die, unexpectedly, in two years.) There were frankfurters, hamburgers, salad, grapes. I had a couple of frankfurters and walked to the lawn's edge and to an immediate drop. The churches, the buildings, the houses of Zurich spread out below and in front. Across some water I could see wooded hills. And further away, hardly visible against the skyline, mountains.

More people kept arriving. I could now hear French and German. It was pleasantly warm. Sparrows flitted around us. Giuli, and others, threw them bits of bread.

THAT NIGHT CARS BROUGHT the guests into Zurich. The birthday party was in a Guild-hall near the centre. A narrow river was outside. The water looked black. I could see several white swans on it. The guests came from different parts of Western Europe. They were mostly publishers. But I did meet Alfred Andersch. A gentle man with a pleasant face, a nice smile. ("Why write novels if you can write short stories.") He would die within a year. And Elias Canetti. A short stocky man with a large face, high forehead, thick black hair brushed back. (He would be awarded the Nobel Prize.)

There were speeches, toasts, in English. Then the guests went in line to another room where—on a long table with white table-cloths—there were lit candles and all sorts of food. Platters of shrimps . . . asparagus . . . a large cooked salmon . . . roast beef . . . the salads were colourful. I looked ahead to the far end where the cakes were. And saw, on the table, what I thought was one of the white swans from the river. As I came closer I realised it was made of butter.

Later that night, in the house, seven of us who were staying as guests sat with Ruth in the kitchen. We talked and drank. I was the only male. The women's ages spread from the late thirties into the seventies. The youngest was the girl from upstairs who rented a room and worked in Zurich. She was waiting for her gentleman-friend to phone to let her know when he would be in Zurich. After she spoke to him she came down and joined us. And she started to sing, *It's All Right With Me*. She had a fine voice. We joined in. There were more Cole Porter songs. And Jerome Kern. Then the older ladies sang, very enthusiastically, European Socialist songs. And went on to folk-songs, mostly German. (Ruth was born in Hamburg.) The one that made an impression was a slow, sad tune about the Black Death.

Giuli, sitting beside me, said in broken English how her husband, a pilot in the Italian Air Force, was killed while flying. And how lucky she was to find Ruth. Then, with more wine, she began to talk Italian to everyone and stood up wanting us all to dance. We formed a chorus-line, Ruth in the middle. We kicked our legs up and sang as we moved around the kitchen. Then tired we sat down. This time Ruth was beside me, a little out of breath. While our glasses were being filled again I asked her—what was she thinking when she saw those large bunches of roses all over the house?

And she said, that during the last War she worked as a courier for the Resistance. They sent her to Holland. The Nazis tracked her down. "Things became difficult. I was on a wanted list. I had to stay inside my small room. I couldn't go out.

"In the next room there was a man called Karfunkelstein. He told me he was going to commit suicide. I asked him why.

'One can't live with a name like Karfunkelstein in these times.'

I managed to talk him out of it.

'Wait', he said. And left me.

When he came back he had his arms full of roses and other flowers.

'For you', he said.

And gave them to me.

My small room was full of flowers. And I couldn't go out to sell a rose for food."

FOUR AND A HALF YEARS LATER, early this December, I saw Ruth again. I had been invited to Strasbourg to give a lecture at the university. After the lecture I took a train to Zurich. Outside the station I went into a waiting taxi. I gave the driver the name of the street.

He replied with the number I wanted.

"How did you know?"

"Many people go there."

This time no guests or flowers. But the same warm welcome. The young man who met me at the airport was still doing the accounts, still looked shy, and smiled easily. His hair was grey. I met the new housekeeper, Juliette. She came from France. About the same age as Ruth.

It was cold and foggy. At dusk I could see the lights of Zurich below. Juliette brought in some coffee and for over an hour Ruth and I talked business. She phoned up the Canadian Embassy in Bonn and spoke to the cultural attaché about an East German translation. She phoned a radio station in Cologne about a short story that had been broadcast. We went over a contract line by line. Then Ruth said:

"I must go and lie down for twenty minutes."

She went upstairs. I went into the kitchen. And talked to Juliette while she was preparing the food. Juliette told me she used to be a photographer in Paris before the War. Then worked in London. She had a studio in Knightsbridge. And talked nostalgically of the time she lived there. A small radio was on. Someone was playing a guitar. I said I liked Django Reinhardt.

"I knew him", Juliette said. "My husband André was his best friend for some years."

Ruth appeared looking less tired.

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"You didn't stay twenty minutes", Juliette said in mock anger.

Ruth and I finished the rest of our business over a drink. Then it was time for supper. The three of us sat around a small table in the kitchen, in a corner, by the stove. We had red wine. We clinked glasses and drank to our next meeting.

Juliette passed the salad bowl.

I asked her about Django Reinhardt.

"He couldn't read or write. He was a gypsy", she said. "Very black hair but good white teeth. You know how he got those two fingers? His wife was in a caravan making artificial flowers when there was a fire. Django ran in and saved her. His hand was burned. . . . Oh, he was a bad driver. He had so many accidents . . . the car looked a wreck. One time he came to see us with a new shirt, a tie, and a new suit. He asked my husband what was the proper way to wear it? André showed him. Django stood in front of the mirror wearing the new clothes, looking at himself, very pleased at the way he looked. (Juliette acted this out with little movements of her face and hands as she spoke.) We listened to him play . . . he would play for hours . . . if I could have recorded it. . . . He only began to make records so he could give them to his friends. But he could be difficult. To get him to go to the recording-studio on time my husband would say, Django, you are late . . . the machinery is all set-up . . . there are people waiting . . . they have their jobs. And Django would not go. André tried again. And Django got angry.

'I need my freedom. If I can't have my freedom . . . it's not my life.'

Later he bought a château near Paris. That life didn't suit him. He was ruined . . . by money . . . by women . . . fame. He couldn't handle it."

Juliette stood up and from the stove brought a small casserole and served the meat and the vegetables.

"What happened to Karfunkelstein?" I asked Ruth.

"He probably committed suicide", she said in a flat voice. "In those days people like him did. . . .

On May 10th 1940", she went on, "the Germans came into Holland. Next day there was an epidemic of suicides. There were not enough coffins. They put them in sacks.

I knew this young family. They had two small boys The man was a teacher. His wife was in love with him. She would go along with whatever he wanted. And he wanted to commit suicide. He kept saying: 'Life as it is going to be . . . will not be worth living.'

I knew someone in the American Embassy. I arranged for them to see him next morning so they could get out of Holland. But I wanted to make sure they would be there.

I went to their house. The man was still saying that life without freedom to live the way he had lived would be impossible . . . when the youngest boy swallowed a small bulb from a flashlight. (At least his mother said that he did.) She was very worried. She asked me: What should she do? How could she get a doctor? After a while the child got better. Because I saw how worried she had been I thought it was all right to leave them for the night. I said I would be back tomorrow morning.

When I arrived the two boys were dead. The man and the wife had sealed all the doors and windows. Turned on the gas. And they had cut their wrists."

WHEN WE HAD FINISHED, Juliette began to clear and wash up while Ruth went into the other room to dictate letters into a machine for the secretary next morning. I went up to the room where I would sleep the night—a large bare room in the attic with a low double bed, books all over, and a wide window with a view of Zurich. I looked at the lights and thought of the people who had come to Zurich, from other countries, for different reasons. And how few of them stayed.

Juliette came to the door and said, "There is a Canadian film on television. Have you heard of it? It is called *Mon Oncle Antoine*."

"It's the best Canadian film I have seen", I said.

"Then we shall all see it", she said.

I went down with her.

Juliette drew the curtains. Ruth put in a hearing-aid. "I only do this for television", she said.

I looked forward to seeing the film again. I had seen it, about twenty years ago, in St Ives on television and remembered how moved I had been by it.

"There is a marvellous shot", I said while the news was on. "It is winter. On the extreme left of the picture there is a horse and a sleigh with a young boy and his uncle. The horse has stopped. And on the extreme right of this picture is a coffin that has fallen off the sleigh. In between there is this empty field of snow. It is night. The wind is blowing . . . no words are spoken. But that image I have remembered all these years."

Mon Oncle Antoine came on. The first surprise—it was in colour. I remembered it in black and white. Then I realised . . . it was because in St Ives we had then a black and white TV set. There were other disappointments. It might have been because of the German subtitles, or my memory.

I told them the scene was about to come on.

When it did—it wasn't memorable at all.

Was it because it was in colour? Or had it been cut? I remembered it as lasting much longer. And it was the length of the shot, in black and white, that made it so poignant.

When the film was over I could see they were disappointed.

"I remember it differently", I said. And told them how I had seen it on a black and white TV set.

"It would have been better in black and white", Ruth said.

"There may have been cuts."

"It seemed very jumpy", Juliette said. "You could

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see it had the possibility of a good movie."

THAT NIGHT in the attic, in bed, I heard midnight by the different clocks in Zurich. I didn't count how many. But there were several. Each one starting a few seconds after another . . . and thought about *Mon Oncle Antoine*. How it differed from what I remembered. I saw how I had changed that shot. Just as I had switched the candles from around the man in the coffin at the start. And had them around the boy in the coffin at the end. I had, over the years, changed these things in order to remember them. Is this what time does? Perhaps it was a good film because it could suggest these things.

And was this what Juliette had done when she told about Django Reinhardt. And Ruth with Karfunkelstein?

But some things don't change.

I remembered my wife having to go into Penzance hospital to drain off some fluid. It was in the last two weeks of her life. She hadn't been outside for over a year but in that front room where I brought down a bed. And from there she looked at the granite of Wesley Street and Mr Veal feeding the birds. Two men carried her out on a canvas and put her in the back of the ambulance.

When she returned she said, "It's so beautiful. The sky . . . the clouds . . . the trees . . . the fields . . . the hedges. I was lying on my back and I could see through the windows. . . ."

EARLY NEXT MORNING Ruth drove me to the railway station. The streets were quite empty. The sun was not high above the horizon. And here it was snowing. The sun caught the glass of the buildings, the houses, and lit them up. And the snow was falling . . . thick flakes.

"My aunt in Israel is ninety", Ruth said. "And drives her car. Isn't that marvellous."

We were going down a turning road, down a slope, then it straightened out. I asked her,

"Will you go on living in Zurich?"

"I don't know. The only other country would be Holland. I like Holland."

After she left I went inside the station and gave all the Swiss change I had to a plump young girl who was selling things from a portable kiosk. In return I had a bar of chocolate, a large green apple, and a yellow pack of five small cigars.

Cold Snap Snap

Northness congealed. Water like rock
below black whiteness. Birds starve
tamely. One bedraggled rose
still in the garden. Red for danger.
The coffins are arriving. His has gone upstairs.
Why no names carved
in useless brass any more? . . . No
better than Beaker Folk. Whose is this
with the name in whitewash? Oh, not yet
surely! . . . Tonight
more blizzards suavely forecast
from centrally heated studios.
. . . The sheep also will be dying
by the ruined abbey: stony chorales
where we sauntered that summer
preparing for winter.

My illustrious colleague, rightly
knighted long ago, says we are
midway between Ice Ages. Which of course,
shivering, I believe. And as for the birds,
it is this week—no, today; no,
perhaps an hour or so; no, *mauvais*
quart d'heure . . . .

They are Ageless.

John Holloway

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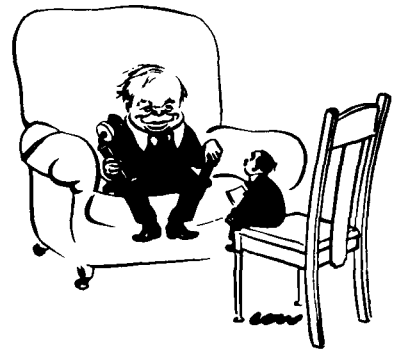
Adrian Smith

Low and Lord Beaverbrook

The Cartoonist & the Newspaper Proprietor



THE National Portrait Gallery's exhibition of the work of Sir David Low follows the recent reissue of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's masterly wartime feature film, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*.[1] Attention is thus again drawn to the best-known and most talented artist employed by Fleet Street this century.

Although Low lived in England from 1919 until his death in 1963, he was in fact from New Zealand, where his earliest drawings appeared in the local Christchurch press. As a young man he had taught himself to follow the example of caricaturists as diverse as Daumier and Phil May, and developed the capacity to draw fast and accurately from life. Brought up in a peculiarly antipodean tradition of radical politics, he sought work with sympathetic papers like the *Sydney Bulletin*. He was based in the *Bulletin*'s Melbourne office from 1911, and travelled all over Australia to meet and sketch the new nation's most powerful public figures. At the same time he paid shrewd attention to his more articulate colleagues, in particular exchanging ideas and techniques with other cartoonists such as Will Dyson and Norman Lindsay. Yet, when they left for London, Low chose to continue working on his style at home. Within two years Australia was at war. Its Prime Minister during the later stages of the First World War was the tempestuous and flamboyant Billy Hughes, and Low's prolific studies of him, highly uncomplimentary yet with more than a hint of warmth or even awe, created a popular image that still persists within Australian political mythology. A best-selling anthology, *The Billy Book*, confirmed its author's national reputation. By chance a copy reached England, and was warmly praised by Arnold Bennett in his *New Statesman* column.

An invitation to visit London was sent by Bennett on the assumption that Low would seek employment with his wartime colleague and crony, Max Aitken, the first Lord Beaverbrook, owner of Express Newspapers. Typically, Low avoided his sponsor and upon arrival approached George Lansbury at the then Labour-controlled *Daily Herald*. An offer to draw for little more than expenses was turned down, perhaps because Lansbury still anticipated overcoming serious differences with his regular cartoonist, Dyson. Instead, Low went to work for the Cadbury family's evening newspaper, the *Star*, contributing occasionally to its fellow-Liberal stable-mate, the *Daily News*. Lord Beaverbrook was obliged to wait until 1927 before he finally secured Low's services. In that time the previously unknown artist had quickly secured widespread respect for his integrity, his highly individual and quite novel style, and his laudable consistency in both technical skill and political sharpness.

Despite such an unpromising start, there developed over 30 years an unexpected and in its way quite remarkable relationship. Lord Beaverbrook was a wealthy Right-wing manipulator of power who, paradoxically, enjoyed the company of radicals on the Left—and the maverick reputation which his patronage of these dissenting and disrespectful talents helped to cultivate. David Low was a progressive, but one who happened to enjoy socialising with the rich and the influential, especially when they were also quick-witted. In acquiring such a lifestyle from the late 1920s he would have much to thank Beaverbrook for: eventual employment on the *Evening Standard* brought with it a passport to the highest and most sophisticated echelons of inter-War

[1] "Colonel Blimp and Friends: The Cartoons of Sir David Low 1891-1963", National Portrait Gallery, 25 October 1985—12 January 1986. The exhibition is organised in conjunction with the Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature, University of Kent at Canterbury, which possesses about 3,000 drawings from Low's years at the *Evening Standard*. Secker & Warburg are publishing *David Low*, by Colin Seymour-Ure and Jim Schoff, to coincide with the exhibition. An expanded and fully annotated version of this article will ultimately appear in a volume of essays on Low to be published under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature. I am grateful to David Low's daughters, Dr Rachael Whear and Mrs Prudence Rowe-Evans, for permission to consult their father's papers.

Recent articles on Low, and the Powell and Pressburger film, include: Peter Mellini, "Colonel Blimp's England", *History Today*, October 1984, pp. 30-37; Douglas Johnson, "Was Blimp Wrong?", *New Society*, 19 July 1985, pp. 91-92; Adrian Smith, "Cartoonists and the General Elections of 1945 and 1983", *The Historian*, Autumn 1984, pp. 12-15.

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metropolitan life. Tolerated by high society, but quite deliberately courted by men-of-letters such as Bennett, Belloc and Wells, the cartoonist and the newspaper proprietor shared the healthy scepticism of the Fleet Street observer and the nagging sense of exclusion and *arrivisme* familiar to the successful ex-colonial.

LOW'S FASCINATION with the Canadian was reciprocated, despite their failure actually to meet until mid-1924. Beaverbrook's occasional request for a cartoon or even the odd commission fuelled Low's growing conviction that the two rival newspaper proprietors, "*fat Rother and little Beaver*", were ideal subjects for the more imaginative political cartoonist. As Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook's shared antipathy towards Stanley Baldwin's premiership hardened during 1923, so Low felt inspired by both pantomime and comic strip to reveal the continuing conspiracies of the "Plot Press." "Mutt" and "Jeff" were never as widely familiar as the two-headed "Coalition Ass", which they were once drawn disinterring. Yet the image of Fleet Street barons as "wicked uncles" enveloped in huge cloaks and hats greatly amused the *Star*'s radical journalists and readers. A highly sensitive Lord Rothermere (not for the last time) complained bitterly. Beaverbrook, perhaps cognisant that Low's contract with the *Star* was due for renewal, offered him first dinner, and then an appointment with the *Evening Standard* at double his salary of £2,500 p.a. This would have made him one of the best-paid cartoonists, even excluding additional income from free-lance work; and was not far short of what finally he was paid by *Express* Newspapers towards the end of the decade.

Though attracted by the obvious financial security, Low turned down Beaverbrook's offer and continued to do so at regular intervals over the next three years.[2] Despite declining sales, the *Star* still appeared more attractive, and a politically more congenial avenue for his ideas. In 1924 the *Evening Standard*, acquired at Arnold Bennett's suggestion the previous year, was still a very dull and stuffy paper, its readership firmly rooted in middle-class suburbia and West End clubland. Low's premature arrival, coinciding with the recruitment of Bennett to establish an influential literary column, would have marked a critical stage in the new owner's efforts to revamp and inject some excitement into his purchase. Undoubtedly it would have provoked protests, even a veto, from the still aggrieved Rothermere (until May 1933 Rothermere's *Daily Mail* Trust retained 49% of the *Evening Standard*'s shares with an option on the rest). Subsequent approaches to Low were unlikely to be questioned, given the editorial staff's modest success in moulding a relatively sophisticated, eclectic and urbane newspaper.

Even when allied with Beaverbrook during the "Empire Crusade" of 1930-31, Rothermere was never drawn in a favourable light by Low. His flirtation with fascism, whether in Italy or Eastern Europe, or eventually much closer to home, encouraged ever more gross and unflattering caricatures. Beaverbrook instructed his editor, George Gilliat, to call a ceasefire on the grounds that inside the industry "dog does not eat dog." By the end of the 1930s this particular axiom had been wholly forgotten and Low was free to criticise any newspaper that consistently supported Baldwin. However, when Beaverbrook commenced delicate negotiations in April 1931 to secure Rothermere's shares, he *directly* instructed Low—for the first and last time in their working relationship—to cease lambasting someone still active in domestic politics.

PERHAPS A MORE FAMILIAR AXIOM is that any publicity, however adverse, is good publicity. Low always maintained that he drew his employer only when the situation warranted it. Nevertheless, Beaverbrook—or references to him in the guise of Colonel Blimp—appeared frequently in cartoons throughout the period between the demise of the "Empire Crusade" and the creation of the Ministry of Aircraft Production in May 1940.

Yet throughout these years Beaverbrook was seen by most of the general public as essentially a newspaper-owner rather than an active politician, a perception reinforced by his much-publicised but irrelevant declarations of withdrawal from public life. It took no great insight on Low's behalf to appreciate that Beaverbrook enjoyed being drawn and derided, even when the anger behind the satire became quite explicit, as it did after Neville Chamberlain's return from the Munich peace conference. He could take a joke at his own expense, especially if it boosted circulation; and being drawn in the company of leading national or international figures further massaged his ego. More important, perhaps, was the idea of self-degradation through one's own employee (especially someone so well-known in his own right), reinforcing a not unattractive projection of Beaverbrook as an eccentric personality struggling free of convention and upper-class conformity.

BEAVERBROOK not only encouraged the image of himself as an unusually broad-minded proprietor, but cultivated a succession of intelligent, radical writers, journalists, politicians, and outright opportunists: Aneurin Bevan, Michael Foot, Tom Driberg and A. J. P. Taylor are among the more obvious names. Clearly the *Evening Standard* itself must be seen in the context of what Taylor has labelled Beaverbrook's "eccentric radicalism." Equally clearly, Beaverbrook's close association with Low, and his consistent loyalty to him as a friend (and as a commentator whose views were honest if not always sound) is consistent with his need to be judged publicly as both the Tory power-broker *and* the unpredictable patron of iconoclasm. David Low was arguably the earliest and the most durable in-

[2] Low also had to endure repeated attempts to transfer his work to the cinema screen. Two years' planning culminated in an agreement with Pathé for an experiment in animation. But by then Low had joined the *Standard* and Beaverbrook suddenly perceived the "mental paralysis" of repeat drawing.

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strument of protest, even if often it was at Beaverbrook's expense.

Whatever the attitude adopted towards Beaverbrook across the years, in Low's technique there is a remarkable consistency. The ideal subject in fact proved very difficult to draw, and eventually Low evolved a fixed version based far more upon the general public perception of a dynamic press baron than on the real man. Closer acquaintance with the original rendered this model less impersonal, and yet—if Low is to be believed—increasingly Beaverbrook adopted the physical characteristics of his caricature. By early 1926 Low was well into the series of *portraits chargés* which later that year appeared as a series of offset plate-stamped inserts in the *New Statesman*. Inspired by Daumier, and with the declared intention of painstakingly establishing "a fuller and more rounded representation" of some of the most distinguished figures of the time, he secured Beaverbrook's consent to sit and be sketched.

The final drawing exemplified Low's well-known assertion that, in exercising his inherent wit, the patient and dedicated caricaturist can convincingly portray people "not as they appear, but as they ought to appear."

> "The fact that Lord Beaverbrook talks into the telephone like a man 10 feet high represents an essential quality which in the expression of his real self is of more importance than the actual fact about his height."

In his *New Statesman* portrait (27 March 1926) Beaverbrook actually did talk into the telephone, perching cross-legged on the edge of a huge armchair with his feet barely touching the ground. The impression conveyed is, of course, that of a "big" man, in control and extremely cunning.

In the *Star* (and then in the *Evening Standard*) Beaverbrook's height varied alarmingly, increasing from the diminutive to the statuesque in spring 1940, and vice versa five years later. But in both portrait and daily cartoons the observer cannot help at once being drawn to his facial expression, always the focus of his activity. Thus, the old scoundrel may harangue his caller, address readers in confidence, dress up as Nell Gwynne, or dream serenely of "Isolation Island" while tucked up in bed with only a smiling face visible. From the earliest experiments in the *Star*, Low gave him an absurdly wide mouth which, with similarly distorted chin, cheeks and overlapping jowls, created "The Smile . . . a successful lie, too late to remodel even with the co-operation of the original." If the *New Statesman* portrait is ostensibly "of a more penetrating and studied nature than the usual newspaper caricature", then the more familiar cartoon image can be seen—again in Low's own words—as "more a fantastic invention than a caricature of the man as he is." Reflecting on his work in *Ye Madde Designer*, Low saw "The Smile" as no more than a mere expediency. However, he highlighted this unusual sense of the fantastic by reproducing from June 1930 an almost surreal cartoon, "*The Smile that speaks volumes*. . . ."

Beaverbrook is first seen in a familiar pose, but no longer talking into the telephone. Instead he sits looking like Lord Fauntleroy and grinning at his interviewer (an even more diminutive Low, who balances precariously on the edge of a dining-chair). The Smile grows and grows in response to the persistent questioning of an ever more astonished Low. Finally, confronted by no more than two huge lips framed in massive jowls, the interviewer flees to warn of the gravity of the situation. The conscious irony is that Beaverbrook had no need to say anything in the spring of 1930, as the "Empire Crusade" appeared on the surface to be gaining momentum. In Low's eyes, however, this silent smugness only hid the fact that there was little more which could be said about the movement. As he noted privately, Beaverbrook was

> ". . . an idealistic dreamer of the most romantic kind himself, when it came to empire. . . . I ridiculed his policy in his paper . . . although my opposition was based upon expediency rather than principle."

Low had made plain his views on the absurdity of the "Empire Crusade" at its inception in July 1929. His good-humoured refusal to take seriously the greatest gamble of his employer's political career remained consistent throughout the next two years. But before considering the issue of "Empire Free Trade" further, one requires knowledge of the stringent stipulations that led to Low's arrival at the *Evening Standard*.

In long and detailed negotiations Low had laid down precise conditions regarding the presentation and production of each week's four half-page cartoons. Most of the time the *Evening Standard* fulfilled his exacting requirements, but he repeatedly complained about his syndicated work in the *Manchester Guardian*. The first contract was for two years, but it included a unique clause which laid down the ground rules for Low's dealings with Beaverbrook throughout the following two decades:

> "Policy: It is agreed that you are to have complete freedom in the selection and treatment of subject-matter for your cartoons and in the expression therein of the policies in which you believe."

As Low pointed out, no staff cartoonist had ever enjoyed such free and regular expression; but all the advance publicity put out by *Express* Newspapers was ammunition for the cynics. Though he became over-sensitive about his hard-won conditions of service, the stormy reception *Evening Standard* readers gave his early cartoons convinced both himself and the majority of Fleet Street that any danger of compromise was minimal. His work provoked a flood of correspondence from cranks, critics, admirers, advisers, and above all the outraged. A representative sample regularly appeared in the paper, although the most threatening and offensive were forwarded direct to Low and filed away.

More disgruntled and distrustful admirers continued to insist that working for Beaverbrook was, in Belloc's words, "a prostitution of his talents." The less suspicious soon acknowledged that Low had indeed secured a genuine degree of independence from editorial policy. His autobiography quotes at length the speculations of bemused leader-writers as to Beaverbrook's seemingly uncharacteristic tolerance. In the wake of the 1929 election the *Morning Post* berated Beaver-

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brook as a purveyor of poison, who knew precisely what he was doing when he employed such "a brilliantly gifted artist . . . whose whole intention was to hold up the Conservative leaders to ridicule and contempt with a malicious mockery not equalled in modern times."

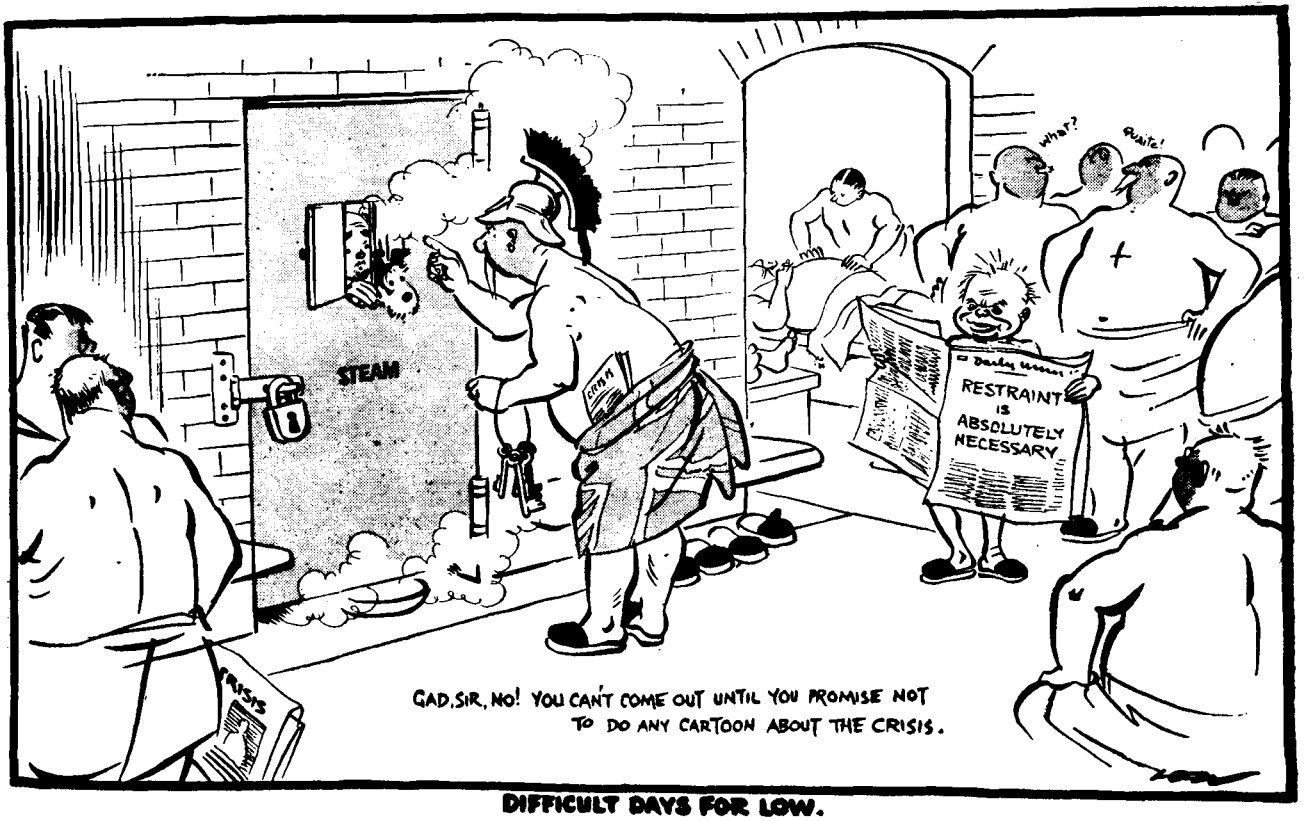
This complaint was echoed by Ralph Assheton, Conservative Party Chairman in 1945. Low had been absent through illness during part of the election campaign, but a common view among defeated Tory candidates was that he and his fellow "Left Wing propagandists" on the *Evening Standard* had successfully undermined public faith in Conservatism over a number of years. In February 1946 Assheton suggested to Beaverbrook that his personal contribution to the campaign had failed to counterbalance the high political price paid for recruiting the likes of David Low, Michael Foot, and J. B. Priestley. A chilly and forthright reply was dispatched: in editing the paper, neither Frank Owen nor Michael Foot had ever changed its politics or usurped the leader column. All his newspapers, Beaverbrook insisted, "were built up on a conception of freedom which gives a hearing to every Party", and Low's cartoons "are always valued on their merits and not on the opinions they illustrate."

Beaverbrook reaffirmed this position in his evidence to the 1948 Royal Commission on the Press. A conflicting testimony prompted Low to write an open letter to the Commission confirming that his employer scrupulously respected the terms of his contract and "refrained from making unfair use of his reserved right to veto cartoons he does not like." In his autobiography, written seven years later, Low again conveyed this impression of minimal interference. He recalled editorial concern over drawing Royalty, and specifically mentioned the reason why he ceased caricaturing Rothermere. Other than these examples, the only cause for withdrawing a cartoon was if a total change of situation occurred prior to going to press. On just one occasion—a "spirited effort" in 1945 about the situation in Greece, blocked at Churchill's request—could he recall a drawing being dropped because of disagreement over political content.

LOW'S ACCOUNT of his relations with Beaverbrook has, not surprisingly, been accepted as an adequate summary of his relations with the *Evening Standard*. Clearly, its owner did reject complaints on the grounds that mere outrage was an inadequate ground for suppression,[3] and A. J. P. Taylor—his biographer—is justified in highlighting occasions when Beaverbrook protected his prize asset from the threats of unduly sensitive but nevertheless powerful politicians. Taylor could discover only two other incidents of

[3] Lord Birkenhead wrote to Beaverbrook (6 June 1929) complaining of the "filthy and disgusting cartoons" that featured a supercilious, egotistical "Lord Bustinghead." Beaverbrook replied the following day:

> "The new generation like the Low caricatures. For my part Low outrages my feelings when he makes me crawl out from under the table or peep through the door. But I hold the view that a caricature cannot give good ground for complaint. Perhaps I am wrong, but I stick to it."


STEAM
RESTRAINT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY
what?
quite!
GAD, SIR, NO! YOU CAN'T COME OUT UNTIL YOU PROMISE NOT TO DO ANY CARTOON ABOUT THE CRISIS.

DIFFICULT DAYS FOR LOW.

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Low being ordered to change his subject: in response to Rothermere's objections, and in the summer of 1940 when Low was regularly attacking Franco. No private papers survive concerning Churchill's intervention in early 1945. Taylor has written of "the man who stood by David Low against all comers", including Chamberlain and Halifax. Within a domestic context he pointed to Beaverbrook's indifference when, in July 1930, Neville Chamberlain privately sought an end to "offensive cartoons" against Baldwin as part of a compromise deal over Empire Free Trade. But over foreign affairs Taylor simply assumed that Beaverbrook always protected Low. Both men had encouraged this assumption, and the Beaverbrook Papers reveal no evidence to the contrary. In fact, they contain surprisingly little correspondence concerning David Low.

By contrast, Low's own papers contain numerous letters to and from Beaverbrook, as well as various members of the *Evening Standard*'s editorial and management staff. The overall impression that they convey is markedly at odds with the familiar image of harmony, common agreement, and only muted adverse editorial comment.

Beaverbrook's first sight of Low's "splendid entertainment" was usually not until he received the early evening edition. Thus any response was retrospective—as opposed to that of the editor, faced with an immediate decision whether or not to print. Working increasingly from home, Low felt little need in normal circumstances to discuss specific ideas in advance, or to offer a choice of drawings, even assuming he had the time to do so. The final decision to publish—or to exercise caution, postpone and consult—lay with the editor. This applied especially to the *Evening Standard*, where the degree of proprietorial intervention and influence was much less evident than in the case of the *Daily Express*.

Frank Owen, Beaverbrook's widely-respected editor in the early 1940s, felt few qualms about ignoring his proprietor's memorandums. But, judging by their correspondence with Low, the previous two editors—Percy Cudlipp, and in 1938-39, R. J. Thompson—appear to have been more circumspect, and thus more sensitive to Beaverbrook's wishes. However, the most influential channel of communication between "the Chief", his editors, and his cartoonist was Captain (later Brigadier) Michael Wardell. In the inter-War years Wardell was Beaverbrook's closest aide, advisor and travelling companion. He was also the *Evening Standard*'s general manager, becoming eventually chairman of the board. Wardell ensured that neither Cudlipp nor, later, Thompson was indifferent to Beaverbrook's instructions, even when these concerned the ultra-sensitive Low. More importantly, all three were prepared to put pressure on Low when they themselves came under fire from a powerful outside force, such as the Foreign Office. Equally, in their day-to-day decisions on the cartoons they took far greater account of the libel lawyers' opinions than Frank Owen was to do during the Second World War, when conditions were very different, and the targets more obvious. On at least two occasions in 1934, one again involving Rothermere's "fascist sympathies", Low responded to Cudlipp's and Wardell's attempts at withdrawal of his work with quite genuine threats of resignation. He exploited differences of interpretation between editor and general manager, as well as their shared reluctance to involve Beaverbrook; and ultimately he secured begrudging compromises. The relevant correspondence paints a very different picture from that displayed in Low's autobiography.

Contrast such relatively trivial incidents with Low's persistent mocking of Beaverbrook, from the very inception of the "Empire Crusade" on 9 August 1929. The substantial resources of Express Newspapers were for two years committed to nothing less than ensuring the Conservative Party's firm adherence to the notion of Empire Free Trade. This was depicted as a radical new political initiative, to be fulfilled if necessary at the expense of the present party leaders. Unable to take the campaign seriously, even when it was actually winning by-elections, Low refused to become yet another propagandist for the cause. This did not, of course, prevent his drawing a disproportionate number of jokes about the Tories' internal feuding. Despite the cosy relationship suggested in his autobiography, Low genuinely relished any chance to attack Baldwin. The then Leader of the Opposition, although he employed Low's cartoons as a weapon against his colleagues, privately regarded him as an "evil and malicious" genius. The "Empire Crusade" gave Low ample opportunity to make mischief, but without any obligation to commit himself to an enterprise so closely associated with his employer's company. (It is doubtful if he could have acted thus in the *Daily Express*, where the regular cartoonist—"George" Strube—was far more circumspect.) Low simply could not accept that a British-inspired and -controlled share-out of Imperial markets and resources was any longer feasible or justifiable.

In peacetime Low maintained a refreshingly unsentimental and commonsense view of the Empire—witness his candid sympathy for Indian nationalist aspirations, harbouring no illusions as to the depth of affection, loyalty, and sense of obligation to the mother country. (A notable exception came during the Munich crisis, when he tacitly assumed the Dominions' full support if Chamberlain resolved to stand firm.) As A. J. P. Taylor has pointed out, Beaverbrook was alarmingly ignorant of the Crown Colonies, and even the Dominions, but Low always remained conversant with Australian and New Zealand politics, and on the basis of this colonial background could claim some insight into the nature of white South African society. He even, on occasion, appeared more in touch with the Canadian view of Britain than Beaverbrook, and visited North America almost as frequently. Low's appreciation of both United States and Japanese power in the Pacific, and his advocacy of a genuinely "collective" security policy under the auspices of the League of Nations, complemented a firm conviction that only joint economic cooperation between the industrial nations could secure a global recovery. Together, such views were bound to reinforce an informed scepticism towards the principle of Empire Free Trade.

Churchill was incapable of understanding how such a passionate Imperialist as Lord Beaverbrook could employ someone who, so far as he was concerned, had always sought

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easy laughs at the Empire's expense. This "green-eyed young Antipodean radical" was still deriding "everything that is of importance to our self-preservation": namely, the retention of India, and a united Tory Party. In the course of one sitting, Low suggested to Churchill that, in common with the other Dominions, Australia was far too independent a nation to continue giving Britain her unquestioning loyalty. Confronted with the iconoclastic suggestion that the Empire was an "unnatural combination", Churchill became apoplectic.

Low made light of this encounter, but his work did little to ease an estrangement between Churchill and Beaverbrook that persisted until September 1939. If anything, Low's work generated further ill will, even after war had been declared. In Churchill's words, David Low was the scoundrel who "never drew a single line in praise of England." He was a corrosive element at the heart of the Empire, denigrating discipline via Colonel Blimp, and engendering disintegration by calling into question the most fundamental principles of Imperial authority, unity and the necessity for survival in a hostile world. The irony is that after 1933 Churchill and Low increasingly came to share a common contempt for the National Government's conduct of foreign policy and national defence, albeit for very different reasons.[4]

As early as September 1931 Low interpreted the League of Nations' failure to respond effectively to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria as a confirmation rather than a denial of the case for collective and credible international sanctions. He actively supported the work of the League of Nations Union and other anti-militarist bodies, but never adopted the pacifist—as opposed to the internationalist—ideals of so many of their members. After Hitler's accession to power in 1933 Low consistently opposed "positive" appeasement—an implicit condonation of expansionism and fascist aggression in central and southern Europe which flew in the face of any long-standing liberal commitment to the independence of small nations. Nothing could have conflicted more clearly with the isolationist position consistently maintained by Beaverbrook and

[4] Low described his clash with Winston Churchill in *Low's Autobiography* (1956), p. 147. The description of Low comes from Frank Owen's unflattering account of an evening spent with Churchill in October 1937. With obvious relish Beaverbrook forwarded Owen's notes to Churchill, who dismissed them as "a loose and sloppy impression of what I said, or did not say."

RENDEZVOUS

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(certainly in the case of the *Daily Express*) upheld until the very eve of the Second World War.

Winston Churchill, Leo Amery, and other traditionalists opposed to the Government line urged rearmament, and no further compromise. They saw only the resurgence of a major, hostile power in Europe capable of threatening Britain's capacity, both to undertake independent action and to maintain the integrity of her Empire. Churchill explained to the Soviet Ambassador, Ivan Maisky, with characteristic bluntness:

> "The British Empire . . . is my be-all and end-all. What is good for the British Empire is good for me too; what is bad for the British Empire is bad for me . . . the greatest danger for the British Empire is Germany, and therefore now I am an enemy of Germany. . . ."[5]

This deep concern over national defence paralleled Low's reluctant conclusion that rearmament was unavoidable in the light of Mussolini and Hitler's respective successes in Abyssinia and the Rhineland. This did not necessitate total collapse of faith in the efficacy of the League of Nations; nor did it entail heart-searching over whether the National Government would only use its enhanced military credibility in full accordance with the still wholly legitimising principles of "collective security."

Low proved resistant to the prolonged agonising of the Labour Party over rearmament, in sharp contrast to his close friend, Kingsley Martin. Both men had joined the newly merged *New Statesman and Nation* in early 1931, Low succeeding Arnold Bennett on the board. Throughout the 1930s the Left's leading weekly suffered severe editorial inconsistencies as a consequence of Martin's reluctance to make a clear break with pacifism. In common with Ernest Bevin, Sir Walter Citrine and Hugh Dalton, Low dismissed the dangers (often expressed in forums of Left opinion such as the *New Statesman*) of "putting arms into the hands of the class enemy." On the other hand, Low was by no means so intransigent in opposing the pleas of Aneurin Bevan, Sir Stafford Cripps and others for the Labour leadership to look sympathetically at successive "Popular Front" proposals for embracing an anti-fascist coalition of Socialists, Communist Party fellow-travellers, and ultimately Liberals.[6]

Kingsley Martin and Low shared a similar circle of friends in Hampstead, corresponded regularly, and argued endlessly. Together they travelled to the Soviet Union in August 1932, one result being the very popular *Russian Sketchbook*. Beaverbrook, who never sought to hide his low opinion of Kingsley Martin, nevertheless judged the book "great fun." A more jaundiced account of the visit to the USSR appears in the memoirs of another member of the party, *The Times*'s former diplomatic correspondent and Soviet specialist, Iverach McDonald. In *Russian Sketchbook* McDonald is caricatured as McPherson, an implacable anti-Bolshevik with a closed mind. He was, in fact, extremely knowledgeable, and the only one of the three to speak Russian.[7]

Between 1933 and August 1939 examples of Low's work judged acceptable to the authorities were exhibited in a number of Moscow exhibitions, or reproduced in the satirical weekly, *Krokodil*. These contacts were resumed, at the request of the Ministry of Information, in late 1941. The same year witnessed, after a two-year break, the resumption of a close friendship between Low and his wife, and the Soviet Ambassador and his wife.

From the mid-1930s Ivan Maisky was a familiar figure at fashionable social gatherings as well as official functions. Beaverbrook on at least one occasion used Low as an intermediary, but ultimately he was quite happy to invite Ivan Maisky for dinner or to his parties. Through Aneurin Bevan, Beaverbrook first invited the Ambassador to lunch on 4 June 1935. He explained his change of heart towards the Soviet Union in words almost identical to those which Churchill had used a year earlier. Maisky found this "brutal realism" quite "refreshing." Professor D. C. Watt has commented on "the extraordinary position of confidence built up with the organs of the British press", and an involvement in domestic politics which would have guaranteed most diplomats' immediate expulsion. Throughout the late 1930s Low and Maisky were in complete agreement on the need for a credible Anglo-French security pact with Russia.

Was the London Embassy ever cognisant of Stalin's diplomatic probings in Berlin from September 1938? Probably not, but anyway there was never the remotest possibility of Maisky giving even the vaguest hint of them to his many British friends. Low later implied that one reason why their friendship survived the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939, and its consequences in Eastern Europe, was that Ivan Maisky privately shared a common sense of betrayal, shame, and disappointment. Similarly, Maisky recalled a close and uninterrupted relationship with a man whose opinions he especially esteemed.[8]

Kingsley Martin urged Low to accompany him on a second visit abroad in the summer of 1935, this time to Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, domestic problems and "the pressing public work of killing Sam Hoare before he can be made Foreign Secretary" took precedence. In 1937, when both men were working closely together in support of the Spanish Republic, commitments at the *Evening Standard* again prevented a joint visit to Madrid. They had, however, travelled together to Denmark a year earlier. By the summer of 1936 the *Evening Standard* had for some time been banned

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[5] Quoted in Ivan Maisky, *Who Helped Hitler?* (1964), p. 55.

[6] As illustrated by Low's cartoons, "*Jonah and the Whale*" (26 February 1937), "*Leadership at Last*" (22 April 1938), and "*The Whale that didn't want to get wet*" (24 February 1934), all from the *Evening Standard*.

[7] See the correspondence between Low and the International Bureau of Revolutionary Artists and the Union of Soviet Artists (1933-34). Kingsley Martin and David Low, *Russian Sketchbook* (1932). *Low's Autobiography*, pp. 226-32, and Kingsley Martin, *Editor: A Second Volume of Autobiography 1931-45* (1968), give one version of the Russian visit; Iverach McDonald, *A Man of the Times: Talks and Travels in a Disrupted World* (1976), gives quite another.

[8] Ivan Maisky, *Who Helped Hitler?*, pp. 57-8, and *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador: The War 1939-45* (1967), p. 205. D. C. Watt, *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (1965), p. 133. For a summary of Maisky's later career, including his imprisonment for two years after Stalin's death, see Alexander Nekrich, "The Arrest and Trial of I. M. Maisky", *Survey*, summer/autumn 1976, pp. 313-20.

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in both Italy and Germany, almost wholly as a result of Low's attacks on their respective régimes. Goebbels' threats during a meeting with Beaverbrook in Berlin were taken sufficiently seriously for an urgent message to be despatched to Copenhagen ordering Low not to travel through Germany to Austria. In 1936, however, concern over Nazi and Fascist protestations could still be seen by management as secondary to domestic objections about Low's "campaign" against the dictators.

As Low pointed out in his autobiography, one forgets the considerable degree of sympathy and admiration for the two fascist governments and their supposed achievements. No doubt a sizeable proportion of the *Evening Standard*'s traditionally conservative readership was willing to argue that, however extreme and autocratic such governments might appear at home, in Central and Southern Europe they constituted the "ideal remedy" for the peculiar political and economic problems bequeathed by the First World War. Even allowing for the spontaneous wave of revulsion felt towards the Hoare-Laval Pact, one can safely assume that a majority of public opinion in 1936 still did not perceive Italy or Germany as constituting a direct threat. After July 1936 the *Evening Standard* came in for considerable criticism, particularly from Catholic spokesmen, for refusing to endorse the revolt of the Spanish generals against the Republican Government in Madrid. The much-publicised excesses of the consequent popular revolution, particularly in Catalonia, gave added credence to pro-Nationalist voices legitimating the *pronunciamento* as a defence of both the Spanish nation and its Church. Thus, for many readers Low's relentless denunciation of the Nationalist cause represented little more than an irritating and highly irresponsible minority viewpoint. He and his paper were subjected to an unprecedented flow of abuse.

On at least four occasions between the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the autumn of 1937 Percy Cudlipp (and his assistant editor, Stanley Tiquet) either requested or directly instructed Low not to submit work likely to cause offence abroad. In regular contact with Rex Leeper of the Foreign Office's News Department, and perhaps even with Downing Street itself, Cudlipp warned Low that "a newspaper must be very keenly alive to its responsibilities" and urged him (on 9 September 1937) to remember that "There are people whose tempers are inflamed more by a cartoon than by any letterpress." Cudlipp was rarely afraid to turn down or postpone a cartoon for purely political reasons. He had both the authority and the necessary tact to secure Low's cooperation, albeit for only short periods of time.

By the end of 1937 Low featured prominently in Foreign Office plans to mute, restrict, and if possible control those

"PRESS CONTROL? WHY CERTAINLY, RIB, OLD BOY."

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newspapers or individual journalists consistently hostile towards the Government's handling of overseas policy and national defence. A careful monitoring of hostile broadcasting or newspaper comment followed Lord Halifax's visit to Berlin in November 1937.

Goebbels contrasted the German press's sympathetic treatment of the Abdication a year earlier with its British counterpart's attitude towards the Nazi leadership. He added that Hitler was especially sensitive to cartoons, particularly those of David Low.

In reply, Halifax made the point that newspapers at home were not subject to government control; but that he would endeavour to ensure a generally less offensive coverage of Anglo-German affairs. The Foreign Office consequently launched a series of initiatives, and Rex Leeper's limited success in "news management" depended heavily upon close departmental and even ministerial contact with editors and proprietors.

In early December 1937, less than a fortnight after his return from Germany, Halifax had lunch with Michael Wardell in order "*to get at Low.*" Meanwhile, Neville Chamberlain was expressing sympathy for Nazi complaints about such "bitter cartoons" in an address to the Newspaper Society. Without informing the Foreign Secretary (Anthony Eden), Lord Halifax now agreed to have lunch with Low. It is a fair indication of how far the Government was prepared to go to bring individual journalists into line that a senior Cabinet Minister could agree to meet a cartoonist.

Low gave an account of this meeting in his autobiography, and recalled his deep scepticism about the claim that future peace would be surer if his work ceased to annoy the Nazis. Convinced that the Government was "being taken for a ride", he nevertheless adopted a less personal note in his drawings. His Saturday comic-strip of *Hit and Muss*, reluctantly agreed to by Cudlipp some weeks earlier, was dropped in favour of a composite character called "Muzzler." A few weeks after "Muzzler" first appeared, *Anschluss* took place. Low felt no qualms in immediately reneging on his heavily-qualified promise of restraint.[9]

It was during his brief period of partial compromise that Low drew himself sewn up in a bag in order to appease the Italians. Beaverbrook was depicted (on 6 February 1938) as having agreed in the national interest to a substitute drawing. Thus, Neville Chamberlain could shake hands with Mussolini, saying, "*God bless you, Duce. England is proud of you.*" Disgusted by Eden's need to resign over the Prime Minister's personal initiatives in Rome, Low tore into his successor with a vengeance. Halifax appeared in a succession of biting cartoons, culminating in "'*Press control? Why certainly, Rib, old boy!*'" (on 11 March 1938). Ribbentrop, the German Ambassador, was drawn goose-stepping with the new Foreign Secretary and Lord Londonderry outside the "Press Concentration Camp" of muzzled, dissident journalists. A newsboy's hoardings announce:

> MORNING STOOLPIGEON—*Ribbentrop wins popularity contest*
> DAILY PIMP—*crowds cheer Ribbentrop*
> DAILY GAG—*nation rejoices over Ribbentrop*

Although these were fairly specific references to the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Mail*, there was an ambiguity present, which Beaverbrook could scarcely have overlooked.

HAVING IN EFFECT cocked a snook at Wardell and at his own apparent willingness to compromise and cooperate when put under pressure, Low was clearly at odds with his paper's management. He depended heavily upon an unusually high profile (however unprecedented, the idea of the cartoonist appearing regularly in his own work was taken for granted by all but the most hostile readers), upon his value to the *Evening Standard* in sales alone, and on his personal guarantees from the proprietor. Low continued to mock Beaverbrook's isolationism, and yet there was now substantial agreement between them over the urgency of rearmament. Nevertheless, the vitriolic attacks upon Chamberlain—a cause of renewed controversy in the spring and summer of 1938—were less palatable to Beaverbrook than the earlier abuse of Baldwin. Chamberlain particularly, with Samuel Hoare as a close adviser, he judged preferable to anyone else. Least acceptable to Beaverbrook would have been Churchill, who talked openly of "the next war." Beaverbrook's growing antipathy towards the Prime Minister's circle was "on account of their neglect of agriculture and the Colonial Empire", not their commitment to peace at almost any cost.[10] His indifference towards Churchill was reflected in the *Evening Standard*'s abrupt termination of Churchill's fortnightly column on foreign affairs. On 11 April 1938 an aggrieved Churchill wrote to the editor R. J. Thompson, pointing out that each night Low dissented from Beaverbrook's isolationist views far more than he ever had. Churchill's parting shot, en route to a fresh column in the *Daily Telegraph*, was to note caustically, if erroneously, that Beaverbrook prided himself upon the *Evening Standard* forming a platform for diverse opinions, "including of course his own."

Two of Beaverbrook's favourite targets were J. L. Garvin and Geoffrey Dawson, the editors of *The Observer* and *The Times*. The 1931 axiom that "dog does not eat dog" was interpreted by Low as applying only to proprietors, and even then was frequently ignored: Garvin and (most especially) Dawson were pilloried right up to, and even after, September 1939.

In his autobiography Low acknowledged Claud Cockburn as the creator of "the Cliveden Set", in his mimeographed newsletter, *The Week*, but Low had a legitimate claim to having placed this allegedly traitorous circle of appeasing Germanophiles before a far wider audience, via a series of intermittent cartoons that began early in 1938. Drawing on a

[9] Anthony Adamthwaite, "The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18 (1983), pp. 281-97. Earl of Halifax, *Fullness of Days* (1957), p. 191. *Low's Autobiography*, pp. 277-79.

[10] Lord Beaverbrook to Frank Waters, 12 August 1938 (Beaverbrook Papers).

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popular music-hall act of the time, Low incorporated Garvin and Dawson into the "Shiver Sisters Ballet" which, in successive drawings, performed under the direction of first Goebbels and then Ribbentrop. Certainly, in "*Shiver Sisters Celebrate*" (23 March 1938) no punches were pulled. Everybody was featured in outrageous drag, celebrating "our Leader's recent successes", presumably in Austria. Nancy Astor was drawn taking the salute dressed in Nazi uniform; above her a banner bequeathed "Sweet Memories" from the German Ambassador. The two editors, dressed like Old Mother Riley, were singing the *Horst Wessel* song. Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, was taking instruction from *Mein Kampf*.

Low wrote of this work as being "deliberately farcical, not mordant." Yet it represented an astonishing rebuke to the two most senior figures in Fleet Street and to the second most powerful member of the Cabinet. Within a year Low was freely labelling these very same people "*fifth columnists*", but he never again drew Halifax in quite such a damning and humilating posture. (The cosy Christmas luncheon party on Captain Wardell's roof was well and truly purged.) Henceforth, the Foreign Office simply forwarded official German protests direct to Low, without comment. He wrote (to Bruce Bliven of *The New Republic*, on 26 July 1938) that

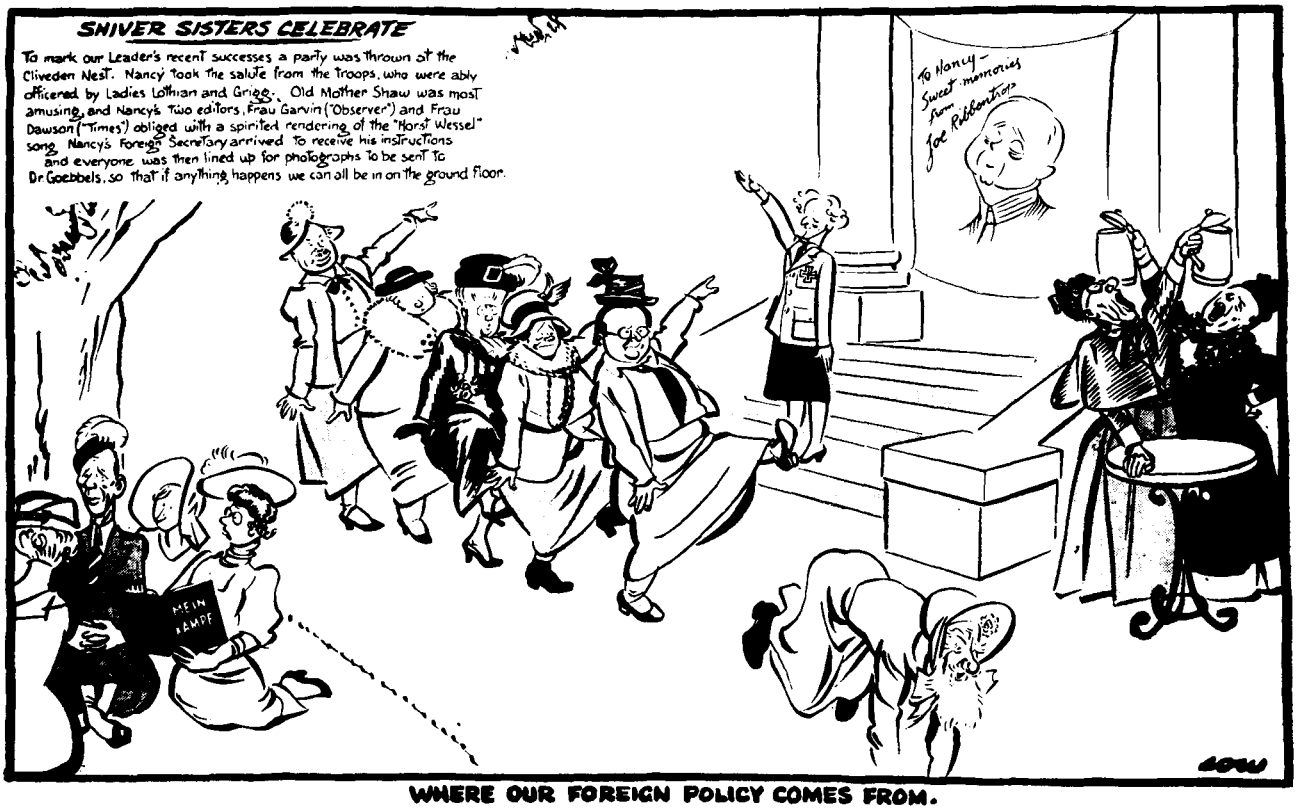
> ". . . there has been no suggestion of ordering me about or putting pressure on me to moderate my ideas. They are not such stupid asses as all that."

To their chagrin, Halifax, Leeper, and their colleagues had tacitly acknowledged that so long as in the final resort Low could count upon Beaverbrook's protection, there was little to be gained from either intimidation or persuasion. Neither had secured long-term success, whether exercised directly or via editorial and management staff.

There is no documentary evidence of any subsequent pre-War pressure. Indeed, when in October 1938 the *Sunday Express*'s Peter Howard (also, ironically, an *Evening Standard* leader-writer) attacked Low for repeatedly disparaging the Empire, it was Beaverbrook who ensured Low's "right of reply" in a lengthy letter-to-the-editor.

An awareness of editorial constraint, successful or otherwise, gives an added dimension to one's appreciation of "*Difficult days for Low*", published in the *Evening Standard* on 9 December 1936. Inside the Turkish baths the cartoonist and his dog, Musso, peer out of the "Steam"-cell window at a hectoring Colonel Blimp. Dressed in Union Jack towel and Britannia's helmet, the gaoler warns, "'*Gad, Sir, no! You can't come out until you promise not to do any cartoon about the crisis.*'" Fellow red-faced Blimps, one holding a crisis-headlined newspaper, wholeheartedly agree. A rather manic-looking Beaverbrook stands reading the *Daily Express*, the headline of which insists that "Restraint is Absolutely Necessary." The crisis was, of course, the Abdication, an event which Low later recalled as a minor distraction from his then almost total absorption in foreign affairs. He maintained that he found the whole episode uninspiring and dispiriting.

The same could hardly be said of his employer, whose inside account of the affair, *The Abdication of King Edward VIII* (edited by A. J. P. Taylor), finally appeared in 1966. Lord Beaverbrook always argued that Edward VIII's refusal


SHIVER SISTERS CELEBRATE
To mark our Leader's recent successes a party was thrown at the Cliveden Nest. Nancy took the salute from the troops, who were ably officered by Ladies Lothian and Grigg. Old Mother Shaw was most amusing, and Nancy's two editors, Frau Garvin ("Observer") and Frau Dawson ("Times") obliged with a spirited rendering of the "Horst Wessel" song. Nancy's Foreign Secretary arrived to receive his instructions and everyone was then lined up for photographs to be sent to Dr Goebbels, so that if anything happens we can all be in on the ground floor.
To Nancy – Sweet memories from Joe Ribbentrop
MEIN KAMPF
LOW

WHERE OUR FOREIGN POLICY COMES FROM.

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to let supporters in Fleet Street (namely, his own and Lord Rothermere's newspapers) argue the Royal case meant that "the pro-Baldwin press had the field all to itself." As one historian (the late Stephen Koss) demonstrated, Beaverbrook overestimated the quantity and quality of newspaper support for the King; and he exaggerated Downing Street's control over the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*.

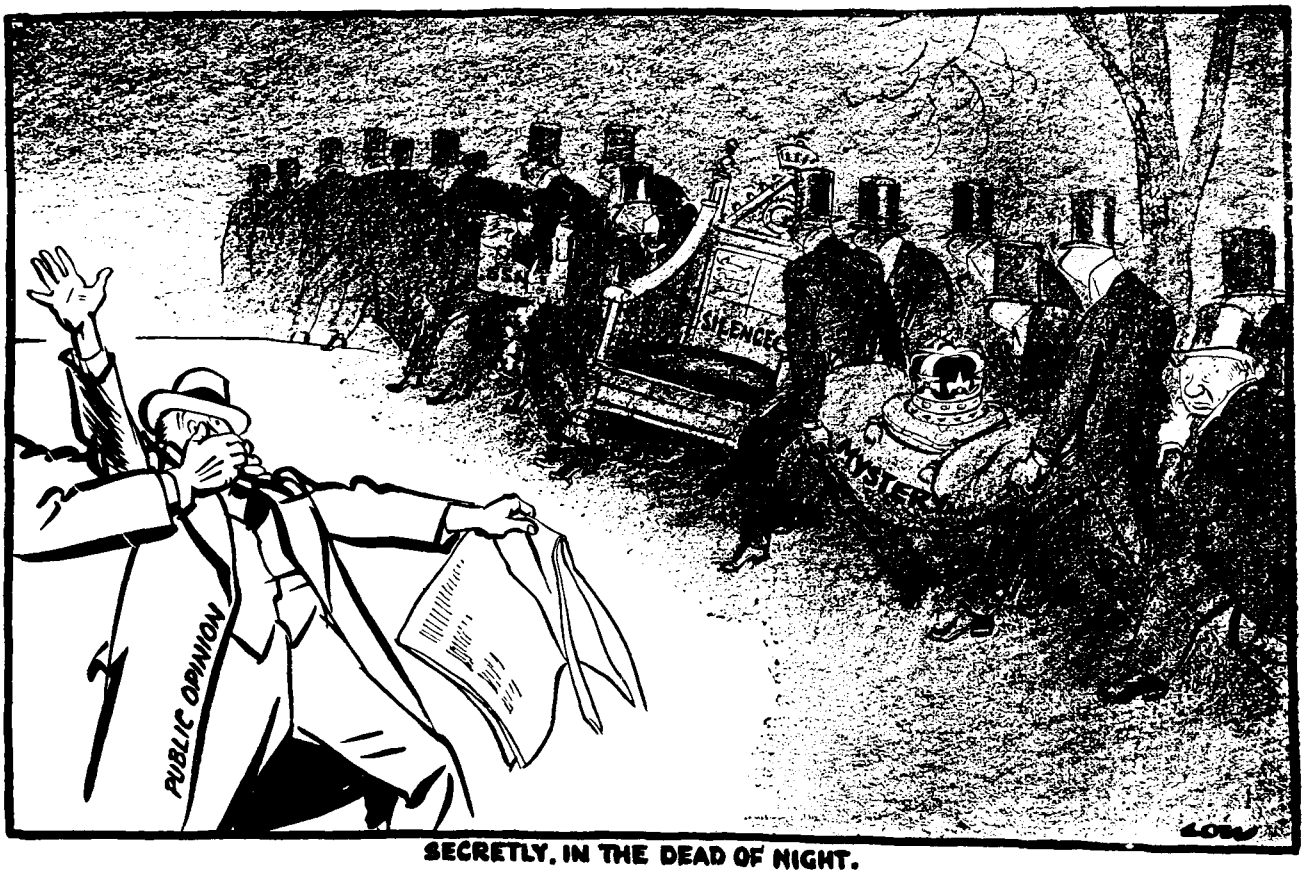
Two chapters of Beaverbrook's account are taken up with criticism of Geoffrey Dawson and his paper. Low shared this antipathy towards "The Temporiser" as the most influential advocate of Appeasement—witness the "Shiver Sisters" cartoons. His disillusion over the Abdication derived from the ease with which the general public were able to transfer their affection to a new monarch, and the relative smoothness of the operation once *all* sides had acknowledged the need for secrecy and "discretion."[11]

What if Beaverbrook had asked Low to make his own unique contribution to an orchestrated campaign by Express Newspapers on behalf of the King? There is no reason to believe that he would have declined, but it could quite easily have compromised his public reputation for genuinely independent comment. Both "*Difficult days for Low*" and his record of the King's departure, "*Secretly in the dead of night*", are restrained and yet none the less highly effective cartoons, especially the latter, published on 11 December 1936. A gloved hand stretches out to silence a man ("*Public Opinion*") holding a newspaper. In the twilight, ghostly figures in Court dress remove a throne ("*Silence*") and a cushion on which rests the crown ("*Mystery*"). One face is visible, that of Baldwin, who holds a finger to his mouth urging silence. Low christened the Prime Minister "*Old Sealed Lips*" when he avoided establishing a clear position on rearmament during the 1935 election campaign, and thereafter drew him with gum-tape across his mouth. In his book Beaverbrook claimed that these cartoons had been highly effective in undermining Baldwin's honest-broker image.

No doubt he also much appreciated Low's final comment on the Abdication. Nevertheless, Low was tacitly condemning the national newspapers' voluntary agreement to remain silent for an astonishingly lengthy period of time. They had maintained the ethos of decorum and discretion even after the crisis broke and *The Times* published its highly disapproving leader of 3 December. Beaverbrook was no exception to this "gentlemen's agreement", reinforced as it was by the libel laws; from the outset he played a major role in ensuring that Fleet Street respected the King's privacy.

Winston Churchill's public association with Beaverbrook and Rothermere in championing the Royal cause was quickly interpreted by many loyal Tories as a crude attempt to form a

[11] Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, Vol. II: *The Twentieth Century* (1984), pp. 556-67. The same book contains perhaps the most succinct yet informed account of the "Empire Crusade", pp. 498-506. *Low's Autobiography*, p. 290.



SECRETLY, IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

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"King's Party" capable of deposing Baldwin. The humiliation following his Commons address (of 7 December 1936) confirmed a critical misjudgment of parliamentary and national sentiment. This undoubted reversal of fortunes for Baldwin and Churchill marked a major setback for the broad-based "Arms and the Covenant" movement, which had first gathered at the Albert Hall on 3 December. This well-attended rally of representatives from all the main political parties, the TUC (the General Secretary, Sir Walter Citrine, presided) and the League of Nations Union had attracted generous advance publicity. It was intended to mark the commencement of a popular campaign for more active resistance to Hitler by the Government, particularly in the area of national defence. Support for such a campaign was seriously undermined as a consequence of Churchill's role in the constitutional crisis and the poor coverage given to the few meetings held to build on an apparent initial success. David Low's interest in the "Arms and the Covenant" movement arose out of his indirect association with a much more private gathering of Anti-Appeasers of various political complexions: the "Focus" group founded by the German émigré Eugen Spier in June 1935, and presided over at its regular lunches by Winston Churchill.

"Focus" was an extremely well-informed, very discreet, but ultimately powerless lobbying and propagandist group. Not only did it fail to launch a mass movement, it proved unable to penetrate the foreign-policy-making élite loyal to Neville Chamberlain. In other words, it had no direct input to the Cabinet, and little contact with any Ministers known to have reservations about the administration's record on national security. The one notable exception was Anthony Eden; but he and the "Glamour Boys" (the 20 or so back-benchers associated with him after his resignation) had little contact with Churchill's tiny "Old Guard" of dissident Tories, other than through Harold Macmillan.[12] Meeting intermittently for lunch-time briefings, "Focus" gathered together well-known critics of government policy from the press, both sides of the House of Commons, and even from within Whitehall. Among the parliamentarians, Conservatives, Liberals, and National Labour members (such as Harold Nicolson) outnumbered representatives from the Parliamentary Labour Party. Yet one increasingly influential figure within the Labour movement who did attend was Kingsley Martin.

Martin's rather surprising presence and, as Low's papers reveal, Low's indirect acquaintance with these meetings may be explained perhaps by quoting a mutual colleague's defence of unholy alliances with non-socialists. G. D. H. Cole was, like Low, a *New Statesman and Nation* director and a close collaborator with its editor. He argued forcefully from 1936 for extensive cooperation with "progressive elements" outside the Labour Party over specific issues, such as reflation and "resistance to fascism." Inspired by the examples of France and Spain in early 1936, Cole later defended the concept of a broad-based "People's Front" thus:

> "I am less concerned about the need for passing Socialist measures in the immediate future than about the need for saving democracy from total eclipse."[13]

This expression of common sense echoes similar views being expressed by Low privately and, more importantly, via his work. It certainly accords with surviving evidence of Low's public and private association with Centre-Left *and* Centre-Right initiatives embracing both foreign and domestic affairs. Two examples will serve to illustrate this: his access to confidential "Focus" minutes; and his support for the programme of the "Next Five Years Group."

Low's response to events in Europe is well-known. His reputation and personality, the latter paralleled by its cartoon persona, ensured a regular flow of invitations to attend rallies and sign letters of appeal or protest. His close association with various pro-Republic support groups culminated in a platform appearance at the large "*Save Spain!*" rally in the Queen's Hall on 25 January 1939. Although he later became disillusioned with the National Council for Civil Liberties (then CCL), his contribution to its early work was quite substantial. He and Kingsley Martin, his fellow vice-president, were particularly prominent in the 1934 campaign to discredit the Incitement to Disaffection Bill, popularly known as the "Sedition Bill."[14] In Low's eyes, the detachment of the public commentator could no longer be deemed defensible. At such a critical time the transition from token "platform-sitter" to public speaker was a necessary—albeit short-lived—response.

> "Someone had to record opposition . . . even if the frequent appearance of the same block of names did rather give the impression of a divinely self-appointed body of Conscience."

In recalling these heady experiences Low made only passing reference to his less publicised activities, including his "Popular Front" contacts with Centre and Centre-Right groups critical of government policy. "Focus" depended upon first-class intelligence from abroad, and Low was always well-informed about developments in Central Europe and the United States. He remained in touch with anti-Nazis still inside Germany, American correspondents resident in London, and critics of isolationism within the Roosevelt administration. Perhaps most important of all were his regular contacts with the Soviet Ambassador, Maisky. Looking back on the early years at the *Evening Standard*, Low recalled:

> "I was still essentially a lone hand, but bit by bit, without design, almost inadvertently, I had acquired a network of sources of information and 'background' which would have done credit to an expert spy."

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[12] D. C. Watt, *Personalities and Policies*, pp. 132-35. Eugen Spier, *Focus: A Footnote to the History of the Thirties* (1963). Harold Macmillan, *Winds of Change 1914-1939* (1966), pp. 548-49.

[13] G. D. H. Cole, *The People's Front* (1937), quoted in Arthur Marwick, "Middle Opinion in the Thirties: Planning, Progress and Political 'Agreement'", *English Historical Review* (April 1964), p. 296.

[14] See *Low's Autobiography*, pp. 295-96, and Noreen Branson and Margot Heinemann, *Britain in the Nineteen Thirties* (1971), p. 287.

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He proved as valuable to those campaigning behind the scenes for organised resistance to Hitler as he did to the various Popular Front movements of progressives, fellow-travellers, et al., in their endeavours to mobilise public opinion "in defence of peace and democracy." Here was someone acquainted with the leading figures in all the main political parties, and yet with genuine pretensions to being a Man of the Left. By virtue of personal standing, political qualifications, and occupation, he could bridge ideological barriers *and* enjoy nightly access to a large metropolitan audience (rendered larger by virtue of syndication). Given all these assets, it is scarcely surprising that he was so assiduously courted and cultivated by the Anti-Appeasers on the fringes of government, as well as by the more overt and outspoken opponents of Chamberlain's policies.

"Focus" meetings were regularly attended by two close friends of Low, Kingsley Martin and Philip Guedalla, the historian. Two other members, Gilbert Murray from the League of Nations Union and Sir Walter Layton from the *News Chronicle*, were more than casual acquaintances. Any one of these may have kept him informed of their regular off-the-record briefings. Certainly all were present at the group's most important meeting prior to the Munich crisis, and the minutes were passed on to Low. On 16 December 1937 Eden, then still Foreign Secretary, made a short but revealing speech on the current situation in Europe. He also commented on "the deep-rooted divergence of views" between himself and the Prime Minister.[15] The group continued their meetings until the declaration of war, but their lack of real influence was exposed when neither Eden nor Attlee were prepared to join Churchill and others in a telegram to Chamberlain urging no further concessions at the Munich conference. The meeting that decided on such a course of action had been briefed by Basil Liddell Hart, an acknowledged authority on defence, and as a correspondent for *The Times* increasingly in conflict with his editor. Liddell Hart and the Secretary of State for War (Leslie Hore-Belisha, to whom he acted as consultant between May 1937 and July 1938) were more than mere acquaintances of Low. On at least one occasion Low acted as confidant to Hore-Belisha; and in his autobiography he paid tribute to the Minister's record at the War Office. Low lamented Hore-Belisha's dismissal in January 1940 with a toast from Colonel Blimp ("*Gad gentlemen. Here's to our greatest victory of the War*"). Liddell Hart shared Low's concern over the speed of rearmament, and he was a close colleague of Layton. As such, he acted as an adviser to "Focus", and to the occasional high-powered gatherings of Anti-Appeasers in Oxford, at All Souls. He became an intermittent contributor to the *Evening Standard* from late 1938, and always remained a life-long admirer of its cartoonist ("You are a great protagonist of human sanity").

"*Still on the doorstep*" (published in the *Evening Standard* on 5 July 1939) offered clear echoes of "Focus." The same evening Eden noted in a letter to Churchill that "Low portrays us together 'on the step' tonight." Chamberlain was drawn peeping out from behind a curtain in No. 10 to see the two Anti-Appeasers beside another man ("*Public Opinion*"). They knock on the door to deliver a newspaper headlined "The need for a stronger Government."

Several founders of "Focus" (including Norman Angell, Eleanor Rathbone, Sir Arthur Salter, and Sir Walter Layton) had earlier in 1935 also participated in the creation of the "Next Five Years Group." This was a pressure group that originally derived support from the signatories of two manifestos on *Liberty and Democratic Leadership*, published the previous year. Many of the group's members were prominent in various ameliorative causes related to social welfare and education between the Wars. Again, the group's history is not the concern of this article; but its best-known publication, *The Next Five Years: An Essay in Political Agreement*, does demand attention, if only because Low accepted Layton's invitation to be one of the signatories to the preface.[16]

The Next Five Years was designed as a bipartisan programme which could be put into immediate effect in the lifespan of one parliament. The 150 "informed men of moderate opinion" were drawn from almost all areas of public life, including Parliament, the Church, literature, the universities, the press, and both sides of industry. By signing the preface all were agreed that the survival of liberal democracy was dependent upon economic planning, social amelioration, and a credible system of collective security. Between them, Layton, Macmillan and Clifford Allen recruited an impressive list of "the great and the good." Almost any other cartoonist—Will Dyson, by then back at the *Daily Herald*, being a possible exception—would have appeared wholly out of place among such eminent company. But Low was not just another very talented artist: he had established a personality, and a right to be taken seriously as a man of ideas. The very phrase "a man of ideas" adds an undue note of pomposity, and risks us ignoring the fact that here was an exceptionally witty and amusing social commentator. At the same time, common to all his work in the 1930s is an insistence that the liberal democratic system is on trial. The cartoons regularly echo the central message of *The Next Five Years*:

> ". . . if it [democracy] is to prove capable of achieving new tasks more complex than those for which it was built up, it must be courageously led and it must in some respects be refashioned."

That same simple message was repeated time and again, in "*Still on the doorstep*" and literally hundreds of earlier drawings. Professor Arthur Marwick, in tracing the consolidation of "middle opinion" in the 1930s, has stressed the importance of pressure groups such as the promoters of

[15] Eugen Spier, *Focus*, pp. 128-29. "Note of the Foreign Secretary's confidential speech after lunch at the Savoy, Pinafore Room, 16 December 1937" (David Low Papers).

[16] Liberty and Democratic Leadership, *The Next Five Years: an Essay in Political Agreement* (1935). For a personal history of the "Next Five Years Group" see Macmillan, *Winds of Change*, pp. 372-77, 486-89.

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The Next Five Years, who articulated the demands of a liberal consensus which could claim to represent a broad spectrum of public opinion. The call for a managed economy, embracing a much larger public sector—also central direction of finance; the expansion of housing investment, welfare and education; and a genuinely progressive tax structure to finance this unprecedented state intervention—anticipated many wartime and post-War developments. Low proved a somewhat unorthodox, yet nevertheless highly powerful and convincing voice in support of such demands.

THE ADVOCACY OF "wholesale economic and social reform" offered scant opportunity for serious confrontation with authority in the way that critical coverage of foreign policy did. Even after War was declared Low remained indifferent to threats of censorship. His contempt for Chamberlain's War Cabinet and its conduct of the "phoney war" overrode appeals for national unity. A genuine national effort would only follow a change of administration. When that change finally came in May 1940, Beaverbrook entered the Coalition Government as Minister of Aircraft Production. In government, his attitude towards Low changed hardly at all—no great surprise, given the immensely flattering cartoons that appeared over the next 18 months. Replying to a complaint from Churchill in December 1940, Beaverbrook remained insistent that

> "I do not agree with Low. I have rarely done so. I do not interfere with Low. I have never done so."

Churchill firmly believed it was Low's intention to undermine Beaverbrook's success by forcing the satirised ministers to gang up against the Ministry of Aircraft Production (MAP). Furthermore, the Prime Minister's friendship with Low's employer would lead the rest of the War Cabinet to assume that he was condoning such attacks. Here was Churchill at his most fantastic and suspicious, not least in his allegation that Low

> "is a great master of black and white, but he is a Communist of the Trotsky variety."

This was really ironic, given Low's close relations with the Soviet Ambassador. The charge may have been prompted by some vague recollection of old cartoons showing Trotsky in a not wholly unfavourable light.[17] Churchill's hostility was, of course, consistent with his peacetime view of Low as a perverse, traitorous genius. But it was unfair to imply that Beaverbrook remained indifferent to the feelings of his Cabinet colleagues, however much he had silently sanctioned Low's castigation of Chamberlain's administrations.

The only occasion when he interfered with his cartoonist's work was, in fact, a week prior to his appointment as a member of Churchill's coalition, when, on 2 May 1940, the *Evening Standard* published yet another of Low's derogatory observations upon Franco. Following an official complaint from the Spanish Representative, Lord Halifax wrote to Beaverbrook four days later:

> "I was personally considerably amused by the cartoon, and I fully realise how difficult it is to put any curb on Low's ebullience. But you may have noticed how the Spanish press have played up the Trondhjem evacuation and I believe that General Franco is not unwilling to be friendly with us. If it were therefore possible for Low to leave him out of the choir in future, I am sure it would be very helpful."

Only the urgency of the situation distinguished this from the style and tone of similar pleas to editors and proprietors throughout the latter part of the 1930s. But now it really did seem sensible not to antagonise Franco, since that might force Spain into the War on Hitler's side. Yet (as A. J. P. Taylor pointed out) Beaverbrook was most unlikely to pass on to Low a letter from, of all people, Halifax, merely in order to please the Foreign Office. Rather, Taylor suggested, an anxiety to ease pressure upon one of his oldest friends, Samuel Hoare, had prompted him to intervene directly. Hoare was at that time Ambassador in Madrid, but still in regular contact with Beaverbrook. Presumably, there appeared no reason why an old colleague should suffer, albeit indirectly, from Low's cartooning.[18] Churchill was unlikely to have learnt of this incident. Had he done so, he might not have remained quite so adamant that the high level of morale in his Cabinet was being systematically undermined by Lord Beaverbrook's benevolent view of Low.

THE PRIME MINISTER would have demonstrated a greater degree of perception had he simply complained of Low's lauding of Beaverbrook's Ministry at the expense of other ministers and their departments, most notably the Treasury. Gas-masked mandarins were still drawn firmly entrenched behind the sandbags of fiscal authority and the barbed wire of "red tape", incapable of comprehending how urgent the situation was. The message that summer was plain: like any other supply minister, Beaverbrook could only increase the volume of aircraft production if granted adequate resources. Low produced a series of simple but effective propaganda boosts for the new Ministry and for Fighter Command. In "*How doth the busy little B*" (published on 9 July 1940), a Queen Bee with the familiar broad smile was drawn despatching drones of monoplanes from his MAP hive. An appreciative Beaverbrook recalled earlier portrayals of him stinging the Tory Establishment, especially Baldwin:

> "Thank you very much. For the first time I appear as a bee instead of a wasp."

The irony of the situation could not have been lost on either man, especially when on 17 January 1941 Beaverbrook was depicted looking out from the windows of No. 10, instead

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[17] For example, Low's comment on Communist support for the Government's ban on Trotsky's entry into Britain, and the Comintern line on the crushing of the POUM and the Catalan Anarchists in Barcelona: "'*But, officer—the man's a dangerous red!*'", in the *Evening Standard* (21 May 1937).

[18] Lord Halifax to Lord Beaverbrook, 6 May 1940 (FO 371/24500), Foreign Office Papers, Public Record Office. A. J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p. 435.

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of the more familiar picture of him staring in. To see the faces of Churchill, Beaverbrook, Ernest Bevin and Sir John Anderson together at the window was to appreciate just how much the political groupings had been realigned in less than a year.

THE HERO of summer 1940 was by the spring of 1941 again seen by many as the political mountebank of old. Increasingly public quarrels with the Air Ministry, and with Bevin as Chairman of the Production Executive, encouraged growing Parliamentary criticism. An allegation of inadequate research and development within the MAP prompted one of Low's funniest caricatures of his employer, "*Beaverbrook's Wild West*" (26 March 1941). The idea of a senior minister and leading newspaper proprietor pictured as Marlene Dietrich in *Destry Rides Again* was bizarre to say the least, but it highlighted the trivial nature of back-benchers' hostile complaints.

Appointed to the newly-created but ill-defined post of Minister of State, Beaverbrook now found time to interfere in areas outside supply, notably the Ministry of Information (MoI). Both privately and publicly he complained about the official treatment of newspapermen, especially those from America. Drawing upon his experience as Minister of Information in 1918, he criticised the ragged quality of British propaganda in neutral Washington. His editorial staff were more explicit in their poor opinion of Duff Cooper, then in charge of the MoI. In March 1931 Duff Cooper had publicly denounced Low's work as "offensively vulgar." Since then, not even his resignation over Munich had tempered the cartoonist's antipathy. Low happily contributed to the denigration of a department which had always been dogged by a reputation for ineptitude, inconsistency, and persistent indifference to the needs of Fleet Street. Open quarrelling between the MoI and the Foreign Office spurred on those critics privately lobbying for Brendan Bracken to replace Duff Cooper. Beaverbrook, his editors, and his leading cartoonist were thus encouraged to intensify their campaign. Bracken finally took over on 20 July 1941, and the attacks—both written and pictorial—swiftly tailed off. From Low's standpoint, this was presumably because Bracken soon proved a sound choice. No doubt Frank Owen and Michael Foot arrived at the same conclusion. But a further consideration was the fact that the new Minister was himself a newspaper proprietor *and* a crony of their employer—"dog does not eat dog."

See what the boys in the back room will have
And tell them we'll all have the same
MINISTRY OF AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION
MILK BAR
OUR MOTTO: "CIVIL SERVICE"
RESEARCH
with Lord Beaverbrook's apologies to Marlene Dietrich

BEAVERBROOK WILD WEST

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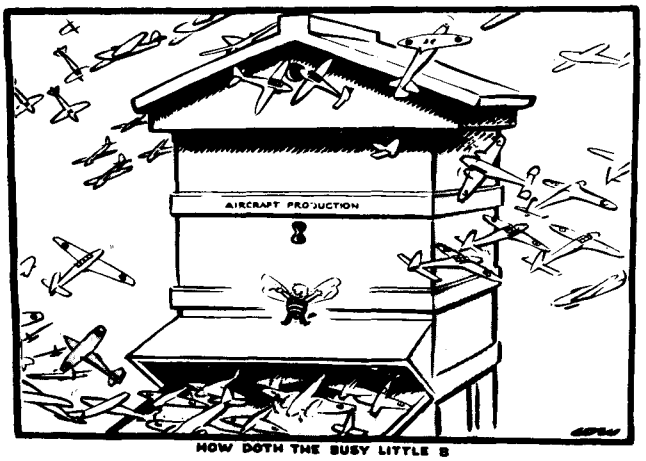
Throughout the aftermath of the German invasion of the USSR Low was rarely at odds with Beaverbrook's public position on future strategy, and on future Anglo-American relations with the Soviet Union. He infuriated Polish exiles with cartoons supporting Beaverbrook's call for immediate recognition of the post-1939 Soviet frontiers. Furthermore, he accepted the Soviet version of the Katyn massacre—as had Beaverbrook. Throughout 1942 and 1943 a seemingly endless succession of cartoons endorsed "the Chief's" intense lobbying at home and in Washington for maximum aid to the Russians, and a firm commitment to an early "Second Front." Between Beaverbrook's resignation in February 1942 and the fall of Tobruk in July, Express Newspapers launched its owner's second crusade, "SECOND FRONT NOW!" In an unholy alliance with Labour backbenchers, the Communist Party, and an assortment of fellow-travellers, Beaverbrook and his men organised a series of very successful meetings up and down the country. The call for an early cross-Channel invasion was revived during 1943, but Parliamentary pressure petered out after Churchill gave a private assurance of action the following spring. No other issues debarred Beaverbrook from again taking office; and he duly became Lord Privy Seal.

Beaverbrook's most extravagant appraisal of Soviet achievements and aspirations, in a New York speech in April 1942, coincided with Michael Foot's assumption of the *Evening Standard* editorship. In urging swift action in the West to relieve the Red Army, proprietor, editor and cartoonist spoke with one voice. The old tension between cartoon and leader column was now absent, and with hindsight some of Low's "Russian" work seems shallow and predictable. Indeed, several cartoons of "*Uncle Joe*" appear uncharacteristically naive, even allowing for the uniqueness of the Allied coalition and the strength of pro-Russian sentiment in wartime Britain. This run-of-the mill stuff was a pale shadow of Low's famous comment on the invasion of Poland, "*Rendezvous*" (published on 20 September 1939). Yet there were one or two notable exceptions. "*Rats*" (burrowing away with their anti-Russian gossip at the "Foundations of Victory") caused a great deal of offence in March 1943, while in "*Target for Today*" (drawn on 10 September 1942), the sturdy peasant holding back the Nazi ape steps straight out of the "Socialist Realism" tradition.



HOW DOTH THE BUSY LITTLE B

ONE OF LOW'S most effective and amusing cartoons from the last two years of the war was at Beaverbrook's expense. In September 1943 he meekly withdrew a House of Lords motion demanding swift action in the West after Churchill had prevailed upon him to do so. This effortless reassertion of authority prompted "*Basic Winstonese*", in which a grinning, gangster-like Prime Minister was seen holding a paint-brush and can. To the slogan-daubers' astonishment, the "NOW" in "SECOND FRONT NOW" had been crossed out, and "AT THE RIGHT MOMENT" painted on the wall. To anyone surveying Low's work over the previous 18 months, this change in tone and direction would immediately have been apparent. For most newspaper readers, however, the daily cartoon remained an entertaining, even illuminating, but nevertheless ultimately transient experience, and the fact that Low had reversed his previous line would have been by no means obvious to the majority of his audience. In other words, the cartoon was simply noted as a further observation of Churchill's popularly endorsed powers of absolute command, and of his rather quixotic public persona. The tommy-gun-toting gangster image—later adopted to vicious effect by Nazi propaganda—had an official sanction, courtesy of MoI posters in 1940.

THE AVERAGE CONSUMER of a metropolitan evening newspaper may enjoy and perhaps even be impressed by a cartoon, but very rarely indulges in retrospective analysis. Why should he? Academic studies of caricature need to maintain a balanced, commonsense approach, and a healthy scepticism. The temptation to exaggerate the impact of an artist—even someone as unique in terms of talent and public awareness as David Low—will invariably be strong. In fact, Low the acclaimed Anti-Appeaser was drawing for a far smaller *immediate* audience than many assessments of his work would suggest. The vast majority of newspaper readers in the late 1930s, most of whom believed the Government to be doing all in its power to avert war, never saw Low's drawings on a regular basis. In other words, until early 1939 the man who created what for many students of history remains the most graphic commentary upon the European crisis was for nearly all the time a minority voice. Arguably, when he was most in tune with the editorial policy of the *Evening Standard* and with public opinion at large (as in the period 1942-44), he became less interesting.

One of Low's colleagues in the post-War years, the late James Cameron, once described the political cartoon as:

> ". . . the shorthand of political analysis, the synthesis of the editorial argument . . . one man's encapsulated and momentary view of something that is happening *now*."

At no time was this more true than during the "SECOND FRONT NOW!" campaign, as drawings such as "*Target for Today*" readily confirm, although for the whole of the inter-War period and the early part of the Second World War, Low thrived on producing the very antithesis of the prevailing editorial opinion.

It is through the work of genuinely great caricaturists—like

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Low, Vicky, Will Dyson, and their 19th-century sources of inspiration—that we most readily perceive the attraction of the political cartoon to the modern historian: the pertinence and immediacy of its commentary, the concision of its statement, and above all, the fact that it makes us smile or even laugh. By virtue of their profession, cartoonists are inveterate and unrepentant critics. As society's cruellest observers, they absorb their readers' attitudes, prejudices and preoccupations. They then return them in a humorous form, albeit often quite iconoclastic, as easily identifiable stereotypes. Newspaper proprietors are no more exempt from this process than anybody else. Indeed, they become a familiar stereotype: the bogeyman of the "Press Baron", from Lord Northcliffe to Rupert Murdoch. Low ensured that his employer was perceived as being a more complex personality than easy targets like Rothermere or Kemsley. The fact that—unlike Vicky—he genuinely liked the old rogue is quite obvious, even to the casual observer. Not surprisingly, they are drawn together in many pre-War cartoons: outsiders, observers, even comrades through perplexity and hard times, however much they may disagree about practical politics and possible solutions.

THERE IS NO CAUSE to doubt Beaverbrook's insistence that Low was "the most talented man of genius." Such admiration was deeply felt—witness his deep sense of shock when a restless Low resigned in December 1949 ("Black Friday"). In a letter dated 20 June 1938, Beaverbrook had summed up Low's work as ". . . brilliant in drawing, inexhaustible in invention—and, mostly, wrong in viewpoint." Thus he was genuinely hurt when a restless Low moved to the *Daily Herald*. Their friendship survived, but Low's three years with a paper which in theory was much closer to his politics did not prove a success. Neither was his final appointment, with the *Manchester Guardian*—the creative tension had gone, to be replaced only by disenchantment.

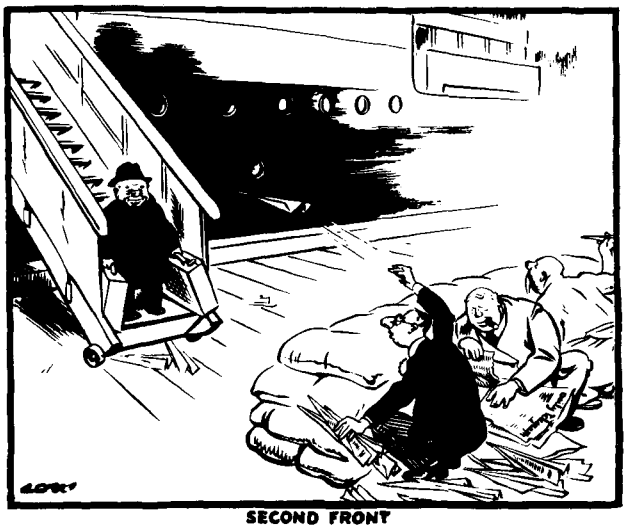
In June 1962, a year before he died, Low was granted a knighthood. "Max" sent "David" his heartiest congratulations, concluding:

> "Other journalists have, from time to time, nagged or bullied, or shamed, or educated public opinion into re-examining accepted points of view. But it requires very special gifts to laugh opinion into such thinking."

This was an obvious occasion for flattery, but in general Beaverbrook had always maintained a very balanced and sensible view of Low's work. Yes, he was a subversive inasmuch as he invariably questioned or exposed the orthodox viewpoint in a peculiarly brilliant fashion.[19] One consequence of this seemingly relentless dissent was that those in power who were most sensitive to his satire again and again overestimated his influence at home, and arguably his capacity to cause offence abroad—Hitler notwithstanding. Beaverbrook, on the other hand, recognised Low for the very polite, and even naive, subversive that he really was. There were, of course, exceptional moments of crisis and tension, such as Munich and its aftermath, when not even Low's boundless optimism could temper his bitterness.

Whatever Churchill's opinion, Low was never an uncompromising oppositionist, even when most trenchant in his criticism of the National Government. The populist appeal evident in his work from the late 1920s, in the form of a bemused Low observing the machinations and social mores of the powerful, decreased in proportion to his increasingly cosmopolitan life-style. His early *Evening Standard* cartoons, for example, display an obvious zest for all the great social, sporting, and cultural occasions. The artist's presence in so many scenes belies the "little man" image by placing him at the heart of London society. In Australia, and again in England when he invited subjects to sit for his first series of *portraits chargés*, Low had quite deliberately set out to establish personal contact with as many eminent and influential figures as he could. He used his employer/patron, and the facilities of his newspapers, in exactly the same fashion—and they duly obliged. Once given the introduction, Low's network of contacts, his circle of friends, and his private aspirations or ideals, rapidly began to grow. Personal correspondence from the late 1920s and early 1930s reveals a sharp rise in the number of invitations to suppers, boxing matches, official dinners, and fashionable clubs such as the Embassy or the Savage. Appointments at the Ritz or Claridge's were no longer exceptional, and by 1935 his social life was as hectic as his "Londoner's Diary" colleagues' (these included Lord Castlerosse, Robert Bruce Lockhart and Harold Nicolson: two great admirers of Low, and one lifelong enemy). As Low's reputation as a radical spread, his intimacy and fascination with the rich and famous deepened. Returning from one of Beaverbrook's more grandiose parties (on 4 July 1935), Low noted in his diary:

"A grand array of celebrated persons, statesmen,



SECOND FRONT

[19] The very quality of his draughtsmanship enhanced his power of analysis and persuasion. To quote Cameron again, "His brushwork gave a gravity even to his fun. It suggested by its certainty that he could never have fiddled about with a dozen pencilled rushes, though of course he did. . . ."

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philosophers, film stars & society beauties . . . Celebrities always seem (physically) smaller in real life than one anticipates."

Was there a lingering element of starry-eyed astonishment at actually being in the presence of such people? Consider his diary entry for exactly a month earlier. That night he saw Noël Coward's first film, and attended the première of J. B. Priestley's new play; he had supper at the Savoy with H. G. Wells, chatted afterwards with Robert Donat and the aviator Campbell Black; and finally discussed with Alfred Hitchcock the problems encountered in shooting *The 39 Steps*. This was hardly the life-style of an innocent abroad.

Fellow outsiders and *arrivistes* such as Hore-Belisha (himself an ex-Beaverbrook employee) were attracted to Low. But most members of the political, business and social élite found it hard to deal on equal terms with an ex-colonial holding such unashamedly "Left-wing" and "progressive" views; he might very well expose their foibles and weaknesses in the next night's cartoon. Quite simply, Low could not be trusted.

Among the capital's writers and artists Low could enjoy close and warm relationships with self-made men-of-letters such as H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett, both of whom admired talent and diligence. Conversely, one literary coterie—the older members of the Bloomsbury Group—shared the prejudices of ostensibly less enlightened contemporaries drawn from the same upper-middle-class background. Low appears to have had a somewhat stormy relationship with Maynard Keynes, judging by the rather sparse surviving correspondence. Although very few letters between Low and Leonard Woolf survive, they must have kept in regular contact: both were directors of the *New Statesman and Nation* for over 30 years. Certainly, Virginia Woolf detested Kingsley Martin, and judged the "gutter-snipe" Low to be his tame poodle. In the autumn of 1933 she went to great lengths to avoid being drawn for the *New Statesman*'s second series of *portraits chargés*.

Low was a working pictorial journalist, and he never claimed to be anything else (this was one reason why he got on so well with Bennett, Hilaire Belloc, and also Sir Max Beerbohm). He remained an autodidact all his life, never ceasing to cram his commonplace books with cuttings, biographical notes, and lengthy reflections upon "democracy . . . colonies . . . economics and banking . . . systems . . . education", and so on. This vibrant interest in *all* facets of contemporary life provoked a deep-rooted commitment to progress, and the articulation of his case through an entertaining yet forceful medium. His technical brilliance—the confidence of his brushwork and the strength of his line drawing—made him the most inspirational draughtsman of his generation. Only Dyson and Vicky can be judged his potential equals.

Lord Beaverbrook's earliest interest in Low was naturally with a view to boosting the then staid *Evening Standard*'s circulation, yet very quickly the proprietor became the patron. He recognised, and unflaggingly respected, Low's integrity, his obvious motivation to educate as much as to amuse, and his strength of character (which all too frequently could tip over into pure stubbornness). It may well have been the final, common trait of his cartoonist's complex personality that proved most endearing to Beaverbrook. Whatever the original attraction, the consequence was not merely a productive working relationship. There grew between them a deep mutual affection that survived the political upheaval of 1945 and Low's ultimate departure in 1950, transcending at once both the employer-employee relationship (who was ever as free as Low?) and the lines of Left-Right hostility. In a world of increasing ideological and sociological simplification, this was unusual enough.

Incubus

Was there ever a time when the weight wasn't there,
changing its guise but always the same?
A hamstrung relay, lurching for batons,
the impossible text to proof-read in hours.
And the hopes for the time when the deadline has passed:
imagine the drift into unhurried air,
trailing my coat through swash caps and bold-face,
breathing rosemary and lavender, crushed in my palm.
Now, some mornings, I wake unmoored,
cast around for my anchor in the muds of duty;
sullen beast, do I need you?
Could I still see my way through an unstied eye?

Peter Forbes

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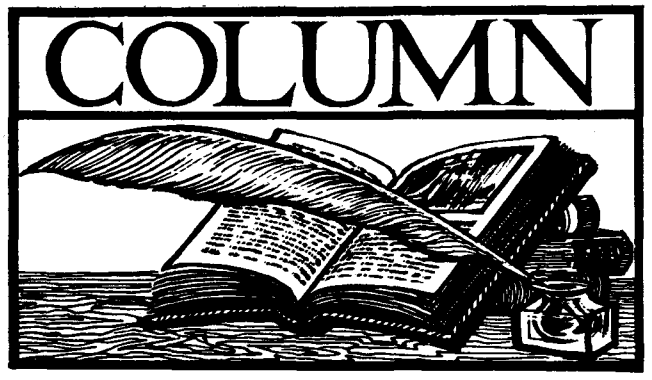

"LET'S GO for a walk", he said.

We had met in a bar, by arrangement. He didn't trust his office, his club, or even his flat—supposedly "swept", but possibly still the target of some long-range listening device. Caution was ingrained after twenty years' apprenticeship.

Time hadn't changed him much. His brown eyes still twinkled and shifted in puzzled innocence, a wary anxiety to please. His trim moustache still recalled the 1930s—a local bank manager pretending to be Clark Gable. Only his skin was coarser now, lined at the neck and flabby at the jowls. In the grime and sweat of London's early evening, he looked as if he had rubbed his face with newspaper.

We headed for the park. "Your people are in the news again", I said.

"When are they not, these days? We run someone quietly for several years, we groom him for bigger and better things, then—bingo! He's blown before you can say Jack Robinsonski, *or* get his family out; and the press starts calling it a triumph. We must be the only civil servants who get kudos for our disasters. Not counting town planners, of course."

"Why is it, do you think, that people are so fascinated by—well, spooks?"

"Oh, lots of reasons. A taste for adventure? I suppose that's partly why I joined. You know: you take the Foreign Office exam, and you get the odd hints at your interview—'linguistic ability', 'sensitive areas', special responsibilities', 'liaison with MOD' . . . . All rather appealing to a fine upstanding lad who's been reared on John Buchan. And then there's the secrecy. We all like breaking into the charmed circle, being in the know."

"Right. And secrecy is a bureaucratic obsession. 'If it moves, classify it.' In one place I worked, even the dates of meetings were confidential, and the only way to make people read a boring report was to stamp it 'SECRET.' But that's for insiders, surely. What about the public? Why do *they* like a spy *exposé*? Once it's exposed, it's not secret any more."

"Not to us. But to every fresh reader it's a revelation. Otherwise, why should publishers put all those facsimile rubber stamps on the dust-jackets? The French and the Germans do it incessantly: '*Le Dossier Secret du* . . .' and '*Das Geheimnis der*. . . .' It's the oldest trick in the trade. And of course the appeal to the reader isn't so much keeping outsiders out, but keeping up with the Joneses. Like gossip: not just being in the know, but being in the swim. And the sooner the better. Do you remember those advertisements for whoopee cushions and exploding cigarettes? 'Be first in your district with this amazing novelty.' It was the same with '*U* and *Non-U*' and the Sloane Rangers. One-upmanship, in fact."

"Or U2-manship? Sorry. But that still doesn't explain the appeal of *open* secrets. Why does David Cornwell go on calling himself 'John le Carré', Richard Clayton 'William Haggard', and Rupert Allason 'Nigel West'?"

"Isn't it obvious? When Cornwell began writing, he was still a civil servant, so he had to use a pseudonym—and why not 'John the Square'? 'Haggard' had a similar reason—*and* it was his mother's maiden name. I don't know why Allason chose 'West', though it sounds crisp and friendly. And by now they're stuck with them. It's always a mistake to change your brand name. Even Coca-Cola didn't do that."

WE STROLLED ON. Near the lake, a thin elderly man in a blue suit and squareish wire spectacles was throwing bread to the ducks. He had quite a stock of it, in a Marks & Spencer's plastic bag. A widower? A careful bachelor? Whatever he was, his aim was deadly. If the crusts had been harder, the ducks would have been concussed.

"Look at that chap. Inland Revenue or Parole Board? Who can tell? That's another thing about 'spooks', as you call us. Any Tom, Dick, or Harry on the 8.15 from Surbiton can play Walter Mitty. 'Haha—you all think I'm the limpest wimp on earth, but under my clever disguise I'm a secret agent.' Sometimes true, too. Think of the Krogers in their modest suburban villa, all microdots, miniature cameras, and high-speed Morse. A field day for fantasists."

"I remember Kingsley Amis making that point years ago, in *The James Bond Dossier*. There's also W. H. Auden's 'guilty vicarage' theory about detective stories—unmasking the culprit restores our lost innocence, expels the Devil from Paradise, reasserts the moral law."

"Could be. Some of my chums certainly get a buzz from kicking out the comrades—though personally I'd rather keep tabs on them. I don't know. I think the real reason why people are so hooked on all this is that, well, they're scared."

"Of spies in our midst, do you mean?"

"Not really. Perhaps of agitators. But more of the whole set-up: Cold War, *détente*, deterrence, terrorism. . . . You name it. It's all so complicated and dodgy that the mind boggles. So—what a relief to get back to adventure stories."

"Back to moral certainties?"

"Up to a point—in most true stories, and in some of the fiction. But not in all of it. One of the things I dislike about modish spy novels is the way they glamorise the opposition. And make *us* out to be devious slobs, or snobs. No. What the public goes for, I think, is predigested information. Read *The Little Drummer Girl* and you think you've learned about the Middle East. Read Len Deighton and you imagine you've mastered the tradecraft. It's like those adventure movies set in exotic landscapes: travel without tears."

"How accurate are these yarns?"

"Huh. That depends. I saw one on television recently that might have been written by a 12-year-old. Wonderful acting, brilliant editing: but even Our Hero could hardly keep a straight face, stumbling about in someone's front garden on

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a surveillance job. But then you can go back to *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* and get quite close to the real thing. I know at least two novels that are based on field operations. They're neither of them much good. After all, the backbone of intelligence comes out of Cheltenham and the scientific literature. We just put flesh on the bones. And you can't expect thriller-writers to make much of intercepts and learned articles. So what most of them give you is flavour, or colour: that's all."

WE WERE PASSING a clump of trees. On one of them, just above eye-level, the stump of a branch had been hollowed out by damp. I pointed.

"How would that do for a dead letter box? Just the right size for a roll of film."

"What quaint ideas you have. Do you really fancy rummaging in there with the creepy-crawlies, *and* while the park's open? What if a squirrel made off with the loot? These are the 1980s. We have hotels and loos and baggage lockers—not to mention video hire shops."

"But you've also got some cornier gadgets. Disguises, disinformation, signals trucks masquerading as delivery vans. . . . And even now, according to Christopher Andrew, we're not supposed to know about the false moustaches used in Grandad's day."

"*Touché*. Given the Official Secrets Act, it's amazing how much Dr Andrew got into his book."[1]

"But did he get it right?"

"Well, about four-fifths of the book's before my time—pre-World War II. But the wartime and post-War bits seem sensible."

"Do they add much to the record?"

"Not quite as much as you might expect. Of course, the record's already pretty big. Andrew's bibliography lists more than 400 printed sources, plus official documents in London, Washington, Cambridge, Stuttgart, and the 'I' Corps Museum at Ashford in Kent. Still, he's also gone through more than 50 sets of private papers, and used interviews—some of them from his BBC Radio-4 series *The Profession of Intelligence*. As well as our old friends 'Private Information' and 'My Own Sources': chums and ex-chums of mine, I suppose. A talkative bunch. That may be why he several times corroborates Chapman Pincher—though not in condemning Roger Hollis. I wish he'd said more about that."

"What do *you* think?"

"No comment! Quite honestly, I just don't know. But anyway that's not Dr Andrew's concern. He's a historian, not a mole hunter. And as a history, this is probably as good as you'll ever get."

"Better than the one by, er, Richard Deacon?"[2]

"Another cover name, I think. Better? Well, much fuller. But Deacon's reads just as well. I'd recommend them both."

"Very diplomatic. And I see that Deacon's just produced yet another book—on *The Cambridge Apostles*."[3]

"Those clever dicks from King's?"

"Not all of them. Guy Burgess was at Trinity, Karl Miller at Downing, and Jonathan Miller at John's. But you must know the Apostles like the back of your computer."

"Not me, old boy: that's 5's job. And anyway only a handful of them were subversive, though quite a few were gay. There were and are some very respectable Apostles. Tennyson, Bertrand Russell, E. M. Forster, Keynes, Wittgenstein, Victor Rothschild, Noël Annan . . . Peter Shore, for that matter."

"Well, they're all in Deacon's book. To me, it seemed a bit potted—though interesting on the early, earnest years when the Apostles were evangelical rather than elegant. And I didn't learn much new about the spies."

"You never will, old boy. That's *our* job. Feed the public the absolute minimum, retread familiar material, lean on publishers, sue them if necessary, and nobble disgruntled ex-employees. You have to admit it works."

"Ah, but does it? What you do, it seems to me, is fan public interest. It's a sort of titillation—bureaucratic strip-tease. Why not come cleaner, like the Americans? The CIA puts up its name-plate, Congress has its Intelligence Committee: and what do *we* have? Leaks, unofficial historians, novelists, sensation-mongers, pseudonyms, and mumbo-jumbo about 'C.' Why not more openness? Why not a House of Commons Committee? Don't you trust MPs?"

"You must be joking—or quoting Christopher Andrew. He certainly wants less secrecy; but he would, wouldn't he?"

"Not necessarily. How else could he print revelations? But you haven't answered my question. Does it have to be all so hush-hush?"

"PROBABLY NOT. We've relaxed quite a bit lately. There was a time when no one was supposed to know about Broadway Buildings, or Curzon Street, or Century House. Now you get their photographs in paperbacks. And there's not much more to tell about some of the *causes célèbres*. You can't have an endless procession of fourth, fifth, sixth, etc. men. On World War II, some of our temporary recruits have been amazingly garrulous. And the East Germans have published virtual organigrams of our side. The trouble is, they're like *Private Eye*: it takes an expert to tell the gold from the pinchbeck. But, but, but. We can't let it *all* hang out. People's lives are at stake."

"You mean—as in Albania?"

"Ye-es. But that would probably have aborted even without Philby to give it away. I'm thinking of our chaps abroad, and their defectors over here. The opposition isn't squeamish, you know."

"All right. But with those exceptions, does secrecy make sense in an age of deterrence? Don't we basically want the others to know just how strong we are, and how determined?"

"If we *are* strong and determined. What if we're not?"

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[1] *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community*. By CHRISTOPHER ANDREW. Heinemann, £12.95.

[2] *A History of the British Secret Service*. By RICHARD DEACON. Panther, £2.95.

[3] *The Cambridge Apostles: A History of Cambridge University's Elite Intellectual Secret Society*. By RICHARD DEACON. Robert Royce, £10.95.

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"But that's absurd. We're not living in a dream-world. Or are you going to tell me that it's just a charade? Cardboard missiles on the May Day Parade, and all that?"

"No. But how would anyone know if there weren't verification? And I hope you're not suggesting that our people could go round with tape-measures and metal-detectors and little badges marked '6'? It's no good: you can't get rid of us just like that."

"But we could demand more democratic control."

"Demand away. And the best of British luck to you. I must go now." Before I could answer he walked quickly away into the dusk.

M

A Night At The Opera

With Lafcadio Hearn
in St Pierre,
a Jean Rhys heroine—
you might have been drenched in lava—

or with the boys in the band?
He tightens his cummerbund
like Nelson thinking of Emma Hamilton.

(No one noticed anything other than queer
about Sir Phineas Ffox,
a great one

for his best friends' wives'
levées,
until he was found without a leg to stand on . . . .)

All through the second act
of *Pelléas et Mélisande*
she held my hand
captive between her thighs,

the whole box
growing steadily warmer.
Any port in a storm . . . .

(Nor were we exactly
ships that pass in the night
when we discovered the English Harbour,
the market with its smells of guava,

plantain, pawpaw, passion-fruit).

Alan Jenkins

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The Doctrine of Moral Equivalence

On an Ideological Aberration—By MELVIN J. LASKEY

I TAKE IT from the official conference programme [1] that our first point of departure is the recent East-West argument of President Reagan to the effect:

> "The democracies have their own serious injustices to deal with. But this should not prevent us from making crucial moral distinctions between pluralist systems which acknowledge their own wrongs and shortcomings, and systems that excuse their defects in the name of totalitarian ideology."

"FAN TCHAI asked KUNG the master (viz CONFUCIUS) for instructions in farming. Said the Master: I know less than any old peasant. He made the same reply about gardening: An old gardener knows more than I do.
TSEU-LOU asked: If the Prince of Mei appointed you head of government, to what would you first set your mind?
KUNG: To call people and things by their names, that is by the correct denominations, to see that the terminology was exact."
EZRA POUND, **Guide to Kulchur** *(1938)*

This is cogent so far as it goes, but does it quite go far enough? For surely the acknowledgement of wrongs, shortcomings, and injustices is not by and for itself a complete social virtue unless the enlightened establishment finds sufficient political energy and imagination to go on and do something effective about it. After all, the ritualistic routine of "Bolshevik self-criticism" can also be taken as a kind of acknowledgement of shortcomings; and from Lenin's last words in 1922 to Gorbachev's first words today the Soviets have fulsomely recognised the faults of bureaucracy, inefficiency, alcoholism, illegality, and have over long dour, five-year plans done practically nothing about them. Clearly, the democracies unless they address themselves shrewdly and actively to the "serious injustices" often tend to fall back into a ritual of their own which "excuses their defects" in the name of congratulatory self-critical ideology.

The second point of departure must surely be Jeane Kirkpatrick's well-known confrontation of this problem—why such crucial moral distinctions are lost, and how it is that an open, prospering, self-critical *and* reforming society is so widely, and wildly, confounded with a closed, poverty-stricken, one-party-line totalitarian state.[2] Mrs Kirkpatrick has addressed herself to this problem several times, most notably at Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) where she made the valiant attempt to beard some of the doctrinaires of moral equivalence in their own ideological den. She disputed the tiresome theses of *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, and their faithful readers among the youthful Oxford Union debaters. Are there really no moral differences between the two super powers? Where does the notion of an "equity of menace" or "moral symmetry" come from? What are the current political (and also the deep historical) forces that are working towards what Jean-François Revel has called "the de-legitimisation of the West"? As he caustically noted, "Democratic civilisation is the first in history to blame itself because another power is working to destroy it. . . ." Alas, the West is in some danger of becoming a willing victim, and even revelling in its putative illegitimacy with an enthusiasm unprecedented since certain medieval Kings prided themselves on their bastardy.

Mrs Kirkpatrick was not then, in London among critics and sharpshooters, very sanguine; and I suspect that even in her own capital, in Washington among sympathetic Americans on the firing-line, she is not substantially more hopeful. I quote her London conclusion:

> ". . . If it is no longer possible to distinguish between freedom and despotism—the United States is a free society; between consent and violence, we are a society based on consent; between open and closed societies, we are an open society—then the erosion of the foundations of a distinctively Western, democratic civilisation is already far advanced and the situation is serious indeed."

I am not sure that my own "view from Europe" will prove to be any more hopeful, although a little more precision (or, in any event, depressing detail) as to what the varieties of the "doctrine of moral equivalence" amount to, who the doctrinaires are and what the present danger actually is,

[1] This article is based on remarks first made to a conference in Washington D.C. earlier this year, organised by the Shavano Institute of International Affairs, and subsequently, in revised and expanded form, to an International Security Council conference in Lisbon in September.

[2] Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Doctrine of Moral Equivalence", London, 9 April 1984 (US State Department reprint, Current Policy No. 580).

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may point to the limits of their intellectual impact.

Not so long ago there was published in *The Times* of London a leading article entitled "Murder is Murder" (2 March 1985), which affirmed that

> ". . . the principal totalitarian state, the Soviet Union, is also the principal supplier, sponsor and supporter of terrorism as a form of political action in the non-Communist world."

No sooner said than vigorously denied, in one of those crisp and worthy Letters-to-the-Editor, Sir which seem unfailingly to come (as in this case) from Oxbridge men, distinguished figures in the British educational world, well-known Polar explorers and Mount Everest climbers. "Fair enough", writes Sir Jack Longland, "and we all applaud lustily. But what about the converse? . . ." And the converse which he offers, obviously because it is also "fair enough" and worthy of lusty applause, is this:

> "The United States is the principal supplier, sponsor and supporter of terrorism as a form of political action in the less than communist state of Nicaragua."

He concludes, with the gentleman-farmer touch of a countryman from Derbyshire:

> "I diffidently suggest, Sir, that you undertake an intensive study of geese and ganders. For both the sauce is bitter."

Note that our English doctrinaire of moral equivalence thinks of himself as a sensible man of the middle, at once fair-minded and even-handed. He is simultaneously anti-Soviet and anti-American; for both superpowers are supporters of terrorism. He is presumably neutral as between the contestants. No matter that the Soviet camp has been massively arming the IRA for its terrorist politics in Northern Ireland, murdering there both British soldiers and British civilians. Sir Jack will have no fat nor eat any lean. He is like the neutral frontierswoman in the Abe Lincoln log-cabin anecdote who fairmindedly and even-handedly said, "Go to it, Husband! Go to it, Bear!" I am also reminded of that self-righteous Prussian police chief in the Berlin of 1932 who tried to give reassurances of his political and moral alertness by boasting that he had as many Nazis as anti-Nazis in his prison cells. . . .

I suspect that English commentators are becoming increasingly captivated by this kind of ambidextrous ideology, this literary form of a two-handed back hand stroke; and some are even going on from the current equivalences to rewrite other bits of history in the same formula of a rigged, artificial balance of error, confounding accidents and misdemeanours, equating follies and crimes. Thus, in a recent article in the conservative *Sunday Telegraph* (London, 1 September, p. 12), the young novelist and critic A. N. Wilson wrote the following:

> " . . . It is hard to know which is more disgusting: the brutal rape of German women in Berlin by the Red Army in 1945 or the enormous escalation of VD in Europe after the Americans entered the war."

Double Standards of Life & Death

If the British statement of "moral equivalence" is rather free of ideology, and mostly unconnected with the Left-Right spectrum—related really to a vague, if painful, regret and resentment that (alas) other empires are now making history—on the Continent these things are ordered differently. Revel has reminded us, in his formidable new book, *How Democracies Perish,*[3] that eloquent elements in France on both Left and Right have combined to subvert the consensus of common sense which does draw a distinction between democracy and totalitarianism, between a defensive military alliance like NATO and a war-machine dedicated to the expansion of the Communist empire. The doctrine here feeds in part on elements of the old traditional anti-Americanism, a Parisian cultural snobbery which has contempt for transatlantic vulgarities. And it also feeds—especially on the Left where the writings of Solzhenitsyn and the case of the harassed Sakharov have made "progressive" and openly pro-Soviet sympathies largely untenable—on the frustration of inveterate ideologists who, if they can no longer be pro-Moscow, can at least go on hating Washington all the more; for if Russia is no longer an attractive Utopia then America must become an even worse source of reaction and counter-revolution.

So it is that we have the European paradox that with the disappointment of the Left in the "Workers paradise" there has been a redoubling of energies in anti-Americanism. When socialism fails, fight capitalism even harder! A Mitterrand Minister like Jack Lang may, generally, be taken as characteristic of this orientation *à la gauche*; and Alain de Benoist, *à la droite*. Lang despises so-called "Americanisation", and it is Benoist who thunders against Western "decadence", who believes (or, at least says) that an "Americanised" West is worse than communism. *Le Monde* (20 May 1981) quotes him as arguing:

> "The truth is that there are two distinct forms of totalitarianism, very different in their natures and effects, but both dreadful. The first, in the East, imprisons, persecutes, ravages the body; at least it leaves hope intact. The other, in the West, ends up creating happy robots. It air-conditions hell. It kills the soul."

It would be short-sighted to perceive such even-handedness against both the totalitarian superpower cultures as anything but a reinforcement of the conventional French post-War campaign against the one culture, the transatlantic primitives out to "Americanise" the world. As Alain de Benoist himself concedes, one can resign oneself to the unpleasant prospect of "having to wear a Red Army cap some day. . . . But we cannot stand the idea that we will eventually have to spend the rest of our lives eating hamburgers in Brooklyn."

There is, thus, a trick in the so-called "equivalence": one

[3] Jean-François Revel, *How Democracies Perish,* Doubleday, New York; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1985, pp. 28-29.

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valence is weighted more than the other, one valence in the equivalence is more equal than the other.

I WAS REMINDED of how old this ideological trick is when the obituary notices of Mr Robert Woodruff—who died recently in Atlanta, at the age of 95—registered one of his greatest triumphs in founding the global empire that was Coca-Cola.

> "The company he controlled became so famous that a cartoonist for *Pravda* could render the shape of a Coca-Cola bottle and everyone would know that he was using it as a symbol of 'American Imperialism', or 'Coca-colonisation'. . . ."
>
> *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 1985

The French Left loved the phrase Coca-colonisation: making a punning anti-imperialist point (where the French Right nowadays will have to make do only with something dreary like "McDonaldisation"). but even then the fall-back position, in the arguments of the day—involving Camus and Sartre, Aron and André Malraux, James Burnham and David Rousset—was the equally facile and quite insincere equivalence between *Coca-Cola* and *Kolyma*. The Arctic cruelties of the Gulag labour camps were supposedly set off against the syrupy insipidities of a fizzy drink. Too bad Jean-Paul Sartre didn't live long enough to learn of how the reforming, innovative, ameliorating instincts of the Americans even went on to change the formula of Coca-Cola. That's evidently the very worst thing about rigid reactionary American capitalism and its ossified culture: it's always changing, constantly changing things.

FURTHERMORE, consider the reactions of two widely-seen television documentaries. French commentators were full of praise for the famous film out of New York called *The Day After*. The documentation of how a bomb decimates, nuclear radiation destroys, people perish, cities become rubble—all this was welcomed as new and newsworthy and artistic, as true and timely and "*must* viewing." Then not so long thereafter, again on French television, came Yves Montand, the famous *chanteur* who used to love to sing for Stalin and Khrushchev but today, after Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, has come to see the Kremlin's designs on Western Europe as the main danger to liberty and culture. His programme also considered "a day after": the day after the Red Army moved, and the West Germans collapsed, and France got its first glimpse of the Soviet invaders, all wearing Red Army caps. French commentators rushed to put it down. This "day after" was neither timely nor true, only obvious and vulgar and propagandistic. Show a baby on the screen, painted cosmetically to suggest "nuclearisation", and the point is well taken; indeed so persuasive we frenetically ask to sign the next Freeze or Disarmament petition—and where's the nearest demonstration *contre les américains*? Show a *KGB* officer rounding up a band of dissident Paris intellectuals, and you are clearly (and this is the press reaction the hapless Yves Montand also got in the German newspapers I saw) a warmonger of the worst sort, out to destabilise the evil empire . . . by "nuclearising" babies.

There is, clearly, a double standard here, a double standard of living—and of dying—with one sense of life for the peace-fighters which is considered vital and life-enhancing—and another sense of life for the freedom-fighters which is considered deadly and in mortal error.

The Operational Code of Symmetry

AMONG THE Germans there is another word for the doctrine—not "equivalence" but rather "*Äquidistanz*" (equidistance), and I heard an editorial writer in Bonn the other day ask why it was that a *Schlagfremdwort* (a foreign slogan) had to be imported for an intellectual misdemeanour which wasn't needed anyway.[4] The pretence here is that an equal amount of distance is being put between Western Germany and the two superpowers if both are equally criticised, equally mistrusted, and in the end equally rejected. Thus, the Peace movement and the Greens will claim to be opposed both to the Soviet *SS-20s* stationed in the East and to NATO's attempt to restore a certain military balance by stationing *Pershings* and *Cruise* missiles as requested by a number of West European governments. But since there is no hope whatsoever of getting anywhere near a Soviet missile base, all the demonstrations of *Friedenskämpfer* and *Grünen* are willy-nilly against American bases. It is a rather convenient imbalance, and it doesn't happen to trouble them, nor (one might add) to trouble the Soviet General Staff.

In Moscow during the recent visit of Neil Kinnock, the Labour Party leader, and his wife Glenys, a very attractive and militant lady, it was she (according to a Moscow dispatch from Nigel Wade, *Daily Telegraph*, 24 November 1984) who told the leaders in the Kremlin exactly what she felt about protest and nuclear arms:

> "I defended the position of the peace movement in the West very strongly", said Mrs Kinnock. "I made it very clear that if there were Soviet SS-20s at Greenham Common my objections would have been equally as strong as to the presence of American missiles."

This is a typical case of the astigmatism involved in the supposed equivalence of peace militancy against both of the equivalent superpowers. One wonders whether Mrs Kinnock and her regiment of Greenham Common women think that if there were (and there would be!) the Red Army guards, protecting their *SS-20s* at the Greenham Collective Common, they would prove themselves to be as gentle and tolerant as the Berkshire constabulary has been. One suspects that the local Berkshire branch of the Kremlin's notorious psychiatric clinic might be tempted to find such dissident forms of anti-social naivety worthy of further clinical investigation. The *KGB* is not exactly understanding when it comes to demonstrations in front of Red Army military bases. Mrs

[4] See in *Die Welt* (Bonn, 22 April 1985), "Aufrechnung paradox" by Enno v. Loewenstern.

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Kinnock may want all peace protests to be equal, but some are clearly less equal than others; if they exist at all!

There is at work here something which Arthur Koestler once analysed in a brilliant essay as "political neurosis." Poor Arthur would have enjoyed, in his dour, misanthropic way, the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of German youth, assorted pacifists, ecologists, progressives, and other friends of the green earth, expressing what to all intents and purposes was genuine fear and trembling at the announced installation of horrific US-made war-making weapons—but ignoring, conspicuously unafraid, the USSR's *SS-20s*, hundreds of them already in place, a few flying minutes away from them in Eastern bases and actually pointed at their heads! The anxiety was selective; and it can be turned on and off. When the battle on the streets and the roads into the American bases was lost, and NATO installations were accordingly reinforced, the public opinion polls registered a drop in *Angst*, in anxious fearfulness among all generations. Anxiety is when a lot of people start shouting that they are afraid. Actually at that moment, as so often in the effective Western resistance to Soviet expansionism in Europe since the establishment of the NATO alliance, there was nothing to fear but self-induced fear itself.

Demonstrations come and go, and such self-generated bouts of hysteria quickly subside. But what we have to deal with here is a long-term and systematic effort to put distance between, on the verbal surface of things, both superpowers and the West Europeans; but actually there is only one measure for gauging the effective mileage: the trans-atlantic span, the incremental distance between America and its NATO allies, the growing apart of troubled democracies who begin to suspect each other of disloyalties to a cause which they once confidently took to be shared in common.

TWO ADDITIONAL INSTANCES of how the deceits of so-called "equivalence" and "*Äquidistanz*" actually form the operational code of a renewed anti-Americanism. Recently a high and diabolically clever English churchman, Dr Jenkins, who had just been appointed Bishop of Durham—some may remember that on his investiture in the great minster of York, lightning struck at midnight and destroyed the church tower—called for a revival of Christianity through the importation of "the Theology of Liberation." Whom were the theologians supposed to liberate? The flocks of the faithful, among the Eastern European millions, who had little or no liberty to practise their religion freely? Hardly. He wanted to confront the real enemies, and (in Pogo's immortal words) "*they is us*." *We* were to be liberated—the British from chronic unemployment, the French from hedonistic habits, the Germans from workaholic frenzies, the Americans from their sabre-rattling, etc.

In Germany possibly the most prominent "liberation theologian" is Frau Dr Dorothea Sölle. She writes poetry, fights for women's rights (not on the Nile and the Ganges, but on the Rhine and Ruhr), and is now involved in putting distance between Reagan's America and the rest of the world. In Zurich recently the debate raged among the Swiss whether they should broadcast her so-called "Prayer for Nicaragua." In it the Americans were said to be incendiaries (*Mord-brennern*), led by the *Präsident der Vereinigten Toten* (perhaps: the President or Prince of Death), entertaining the prospect of "massacring hundreds of thousands if and when they so decide. . . ." The Swiss were upset. They are, as is their wont, rather finicky, even stuffy, about such things. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* was appalled at Frau Sölle's remark: "In the USA it is the lie that rules, and that is as devilish as under Hitler.' (*In den USA herrscht die Luege. Das ist so teuflisch wie bei Hitler.*"[5]

The editor of the famous Swiss daily newspaper could only conclude sadly: "In the days when a measure of political morality still obtained in our media somebody who uses language like that would have disqualified herself. . . ."

Ideological Schizophrenia

SO THE QUESTION, at the end, becomes what has happened to all such standards of political morality, intellectual probity, and linguistic dignity, that in so many centres of European public life—and not only there—there should have been such a fall?

In a remaining minute or two I can barely ask all the other pertinent questions, much less offer an answer. But this is perhaps, as L.B.J. used to say (I trust I am not disqualifying myself by quoting him), why we're here to reason together.

1. In the first place, how important is the doctrine of moral—or, more precisely put, immoral—equivalence? If it is confined to a few English eccentricities, an example or two of French superciliousness, and a rude explosion of misdirected Teutonic bad temper, then would it not be more sensible to keep our attention focused on the main currents of Western thought and feeling? For these—let us not forget it—are, by and large, marked by a sense of transatlantic solidarity, based on a 40-year-old substratum of realistic pro-American sentiment. Or would it be complacency on our part to imagine that because "the battle of *Pershing* and *Cruise*" was handsomely won, and the only minor delay now readdressed (i.e. Holland) that the *status quo* of governmental alliances is solid and quite safe from destabilisation by militant minorities and from Soviet subversion through a combination of propaganda and intimidation . . . ?

2. In the second place, if such a doctrine of equivalence of, or of equidistance from, the superpowers—and, as I have suggested, it works ("objectively, comrades") on behalf of *one* superpower—if it were to move to the centre of the political-diplomatic stage, were to make (decisive) inroads in Western public opinion among the smaller powers, could it conceivably alter the military balance of power (as the Russians hope) or possibly even make for a reversal of alliances? Is this just painting mythical devils on the wall? Or is the behaviour of, say, Prime Minister Papandreou, acting

[5] Quoted in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 April 1985, p.2.

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more and more as if Greece were not a member of NATO but of the Warsaw Pact, a signal of how dramatically a momentary change of mood in an electoral year can alter the basic structure of Western security and democracy's defence priorities? Is such a change, *mutatis mutandis*, thinkable in terms of Britain where the current polling prospects of the Labour Party run ahead of Mrs Thatcher's government, or of Western Germany where the Social Democratic Party has moved significantly away from its old stance of pro-American Western solidarity? The vital question here is: in the absence of effective debate and refutation—and little of this exists: London (even with its vaunted BBC) stutters, and Washington (even in the era of the "Great Communicator") is tongue-tied—then will the rude realities be sufficient to persuade, despite media distortions (which often prevent such realities from being rude enough)? I was encouraged the other day in Bonn by the following incident. A senior Soviet diplomat, who was also a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, lost his temper in a conversation with Bonn parliamentarians. He shouted and threatened. The impact of the rudeness was direct. As one senior *Bundestag* member said: "If this is the way they talk to us when we're members of NATO and have the Americans as our ally, imagine how they will be dealing with us if we ever decide to go it alone and hope to maintain 'equidistance'. . . ."

But I should add this qualifier to my encouragement: for, in the context of the West's sedulously self-controlled politeness, the rudeness of such rude realities has only a short half-life, and is soon conveniently forgotten or anxiously repressed. Almost none of the Germans I spoke to seemed to be able to recall a similar incident only a few years earlier. At that time (October 1977) the rough-and-tumble character out of Moscow was Leonid Zamyatin, in charge of Soviet information. The occasion was a public meeting in Munich under friendly official Bavarian auspices. In the discussion period one listener tried to put a question in Russian, prefacing his remark with a personal confession to the effect that eight members of his Russian family had perished during the October Revolution. A furious Zamyatin, sniffing the brimstone of a heretic and counter-revolutionary, immediately interrupted by shouting, "I'm only sorry that you weren't the ninth! . . ."

The West German newspapers the next day reported the incident extensively, one under the headline: "SOVIET MINISTER SAYS: TOO BAD YOU'RE NOT DEAD."[6]

It is, as I have been hinting, extremely difficult to keep such fearful incidents in mind when, despite all the registered commitments of the East to "bury" us, to "bury the West", one is called upon to "relax", to coexist, to make economic deals, to build a common "security partnership."[7] This obviously induces a "double-think" in which on one level of thought disagreeable facts are piped off to the memory-hole, and on a level of emotion and feeling an ideological schizophrenia sets in to afflict the Western public mind.

There has, accordingly, been a breakdown in the German foreign-policy consensus, and it was sharply etched the other day on the occasion of the conference of West Germany's Social Democrats. According to the controversial paper presented by Andreas von Bülow:

> "The security of the European peoples has since 1945 been guaranteed by the two major victorious powers of World War II, the USA and the USSR."

According to one dismayed West German critic (*Die Welt*, 12 September), what should have been said was:

> "The USSR has occupied half of Europe, and refuses to allow the right of national self-determination to the dominated peoples. The Soviets, by dividing Germany and Europe in half, have thereby caused a political tension

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[6] See the *Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, all during the week of 12 October 1977.

[7] The phrase is widely attributed to former Chancellor Willy Brandt, and since "partners" must be friendly the old idea of a potential "Soviet enemy" is censored. As Brandt put it in his speech in Moscow in May of this year;

> "In the matter of security we [Bonn and Moscow] are partners, even if each of us is playing a role in different military alliances. . . ."

Thus it is understandable when Egon Bahr, one of the leading Social Democratic military experts, dismisses the whole notion of "a Soviet threat":

> "It's utter nonsense to say that the Russians threaten us." (20 May 1983, in a *Deutschlandfunk* broadcast).

This attitude, especially since the retirement of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the slow purge in the ranks of his SPD associates (former Defence Minister Hans Apel, among them), is progressively becoming the new viewpoint of the major West German political party of democratic-socialism which only half-a-century ago was strongly defensist, uncompromisingly anti-Communist, and consistently pro-American.

The SPD Prime Minister of the Saarland, Oskar Lafontaine, sounded the new note of a young militant-Left generation when he appealed recently to both superpowers to abandon the "mentality" which leads them "to stumble from crime to crime" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 6 May 1985). One of his Party associates insists that: "The biggest NATO partner is everywhere in the world looking for war and is 'igniting' at every good opportunity. . . ." Lafontaine himself, who is often considered a future *Kanzler-kandidat*, also appears to focus one-sidedly on only one "mentality" and one set of "crimes." He writes of the Americans: "They were until now the only power that has used atomic weapons, and are currently preparing a strategy to fight and win a limited nuclear war. . . ." Further: "They are, when it comes to negotiating the restriction of atomic armaments, neither predictable nor reliable. . . ."

Thus it comes about that the "great fear" is no longer of the totalitarian imperialism in the East but of a thoughtless, mindless, dangerous ally in the West. "*Angst vor den Freunden*" was Lafontaine's key-note slogan; and it has spread anxiety in West Germany about its putative friend and ally, the USA, while at the same time arguing that there are no "enemies" in the East, only "partners", presumably predictable and reliable ones at that; and only purveyors of "*reiner Blödsinn* (utter nonsense)" could see a security threat on that horizon.

Time, then, to get out of NATO? No, says Erhard Eppler, not yet:

> "I am not for leaving NATO, but I consider a discussion of the question to be completely inevitable. . . ."

When that time comes it may not be quite appropriate to consider an application for membership in the Warsaw Pact, but surely—and the theoreticians of the militant Left from Papandreou in Athens to Tony Benn in London would agree—a serious discussion of the question will have become by then "completely inevitable."

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which led to the heavy rearmament of the two alliances in Europe, NATO and the Warsaw pact."

Half the liberal-left still believes that; and yet another half believes both that and its opposite.

3. If the doctrine of equivalence or equidistance is too handicapped, and I have suggested that it appears to be so, if it is at the moment too shady, tricky, vague, ambivalent and basically too negative in order to serve effectively as a powerful and persuasive ideology capable of disorienting Western Europe from its present course, then can it be improved? Is there a new Dr Marcuse, or a Dr Mabuse, on the horizon to make troublesome contradictions look like attractive consistencies? Is it possible that some *agit-prop* stratagem or ploy could, in our day of widespread ideological susceptibility, take floundering militant movements out of their present negativism and give them the energising, vivifying delusion of a positive ideal, convincing and universal, of a "Third Camp" all of their own?

4. Finally, if such illusions were to flower and proliferate, are there enough intellectual resources in the West—in disaffected Western Europe and disoriented America—to hold the line of argument: to explain and inform and debate and (if I may use the embarrassing word) to propagandise?

Would it be letting the side down to confess one's doubts? We pay billions to maintain deterrent defences against "an enemy" which everyone knows to be the Soviet war machine—and yet where, apart from shrinking circles in Harvard and Georgetown, and a useful research institute here or there, is the sharp, intelligent, realistic discussion of "the Russian Question" without which we flounder in superficialities of ignorant political gossip-columnists passing as pundits? One authoritative US journal (*Newsweek*, 8 July) offered this bit of certain knowledge about Gorbachev recently:

> "He clearly enjoys the support of most of the Soviet people."

A writer in *The New Republic* (29 July) caustically inquired whether this could possibly be the result of some *Newsweek-Pravda* public-opinion poll: indeed, whose pollsters asked a representative sample of citizens in the Moscow and Odessa telephone books? Americans these days appear to be reluctant to acknowledge that the disorientation that will divide, and may well destroy, is not necessarily abroad, among those eccentric, supercilious and ungrateful Europeans, but right there among them "at home."

In essence the question is this: if our Western (and especially our Anglo-American) effort in the war of ideas is so pitiful, how will we be able to contain in the years ahead the persistent anti-Western efforts of the weak-willed and the weak-minded from undermining a strength which may know how to deal with weapons but not with words? Is there a lingering hope for, not the *SDI*, the Strategic Defence Initiative, but (as George Urban has proposed) the *SWI*, a "Strategic Words Initiative"?

QUESTIONS, always more questions, and as the famous sage said: And what kind of an answer is that? But as he went on to say, after some reflection, questions can also be a kind of answer.

Commemoration

This sonnet quarrels with itself. It finds
the ciphers and the signs it would employ
inadequate to fashion what the mind
can only grope towards. Your first-born boy
is dead. The pictures I would use
of February days, of earth as hard as ice,
a heel upon a coffin, to abuse
the last sight of the mourners and entice
an anger at the senselessness of death
are empty, void. For nothing correlates
with nothing. The flowers on the earth,
the chalky soil, new frozen, just narrate
that he is gone forever, dead as stone,
and we are left together, and alone.

John Gurney

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S. E. G. Curtis

Thinking of Matthew Arnold on the M 62

"To see things as they really are", you wrote:
But it was northern slum-schools you saw true,
With Bradshaw's lines to con, not Greek, each day,
Linking those factory towns you journeyed to.
Amid such "grimness, bareness", then, what "stay"—
From all you loved remote?
Each night tired out to lodgings you returned
From days passed making notes on algebra
Or school-books ("dirty, ditto furniture"):
A poet into HMI transformed.

On one side, half-fed children, stunted growth,
The working slums, girls in mills and mines;
What could "ennoble" this, what "animate"?
And then the middle class, your "Philistines",
More passionate for railways than for "light"—
And you estranged from both.
What you saw truly, time and time again,
Was something poetry could never feed,
Nor urging dreams of Greece, and man's sore need
For Homer, "simple, rapid, noble, plain."

You wrote your *Scholar Gypsy,* then, as well,
Those timeless Berkshire fields a world away
From schools in Blyth and York, reports to pore,
Three hundred orals taken in one day,
And pupil-teacher papers, by the score:
The spiritual. The real.
Your scholar sought pure self, intuitive,
Neglectful of career, the world of men;
In what dour digs did you conceive, and when,
That symbol of free spirit, and that myth?

What of them now? Pure self, "ennoblement"?
We've read so much; we're modern, knowing, wise.
"His thin red line of verse, still holding out?"
We joke of him, sat warm in Faculties,
Distrusting dreams, ironical about
His "touchstones" . . . tolerant.
For fifty-one per cent can now afford
Their central heat, and ninety have TV;
O brave new liberal democracy,
Where one in five now holidays abroad!

How out of date he feels! What dreams he had!
I speed across the Pennines. I, too, teach.
Lamplight and headlight shape things frosty-clear.
We're turning Shakespeare into common speech,
And Greek's been lost, the tongue he held so dear:
It's how things go. Too bad.
Great boards of blue and white unlyrically
Point Leeds and Pontefract; dull snowflakes fall;
Unfestal bulbs prink out a Bingo Hall;
On a blankness of Clearway, trucks thwack by.

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Andrew Waterman

Thoughts of Blaise Pascal in East Anglia

for Chris and Joan Speake

Suave Wroxham lawns mown to the water's edge.
In this flat county even rivers stand
still, or as good as. Reeds and sedge,
sun-dappled foliage, liquid sounds, expand

through winding miles of Broadland peace. We chug
past other launches, triangles of sail
for two hours, circle shallows dug
for peat in ancient times. A pint of ale,

then back to leafy Norwich cul-de-sacs
where television prattles: Mozambique
babies are boiled alive; Iraq's
bombed Gulf shipping; new Cruise Missile leak.

Lost in this corner of the universe. . . .
"We play squash several evenings; jog." Me too,
guest of courtesies fearing no worse
than showers to spoil a garden barbecue;

sure of this man-made part of England where
no natural features, mountain, waterfall
rearing untamed and always there
measure our human lives as brief and small;

and on far, farmed horizon trees stand clear
at sunset, neutralising Pascal's sense
of Nature as *an infinite sphere*
the centre everywhere, no circumference.

Who knew as *useless, dubious*, Descartes
assembling life's traffic in appearances
from "cogito", setting mind apart
from world. For *man is bound to all he sees.*

All this visible universe only a drop
on the ample breast of nature, infinite
beyond where even imaginings stop.
No idea of ours approaches it.

Yet also: *Take a mite, its legs, veins, blood,*
drops in that blood. And see a new abyss
immense within the atom. . . . A flood
sways us. . . . The earth yields, voids craved certainties.

Full of itself, his vain and gaudy age
attended salons, cock-fights, or the shout
of Frondeurs. Blood flowed. Centre-stage,
an armoured Church cast bat-winged Jansen out.

Themes change. Now pickets and police replace
forgotten social turmoils. We debate
no longer God's "efficient grace",
but embryo-culture, votes, the Welfare State.

Or wearying of such matter, idle at
video-games: my joystick guides a "frog"
through the screen's hurtling "traffic". . . . Splat! . . .
The next one makes it, hops from log to log

across the river, dodging crocodiles;
and so on, till five lives are lost, and then
GAME OVER: YOUR SCORE. . . . Well, it whiles
an hour away. I press, and start again.

Diversion soothes our miseries; yet it
is our worst misery, functioning to stop
us thinking of ourselves. . . . We hit
a ball for points; chase hares. Until we drop.

Like one in prison, ignorant of what
his sentence is, who to secure repeal
has one hour, killing the time he's got
playing piquet! It is unnatural!

Discoverer of the syringe, calculus
and, asked by gamblers, of the laws of chance,
your clear mind discomposes us
into stark elements, as we advance

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stupefied by our technology toward
perhaps the day its fires burst in blue air
above Thorpe Road or Hickling Broad;
and then the nuclear winter, everywhere. . . .

Game over. And we never knew the score. . . .
Meanwhile, the weather holds, six weeks of drought
have finished the roses off before
this year's GCE results are out

for parents sprawled on patios, conifer
secluding this from that house, who turn pages
of the *Sunday Times*. Bees stir
among Virginia creeper that assuages

this residential redbrick which somehow
displaced what greener impulses pursued,
never defined. Their children's now?
Uncertainty. Ennui. Inquietude. . . .

Alone on Halvergate Marshes in a bleak
November twilight you can stand attuned
to bitterns booming, and the creak
of derelict windpumps, opening like a wound;

apparitions, cows and cattle-gate
among the wetland's random clumps and spikes
of grass; a world still inchoate;
moonlight shuddering in drainage dykes.

Man is only a reed, the weakest thing
in nature; but a thinking reed, thereby
nobler than forces that may wring
the life from us; because we know we die.

In nature. Knowing it unfalsified
to a Cartesian mechanism we
might infer, but verified
upon our pulse experientially.

Pascal, the creaturely empiricist,
when Descartes claimed by reason vacuums
in nature could nowhere exist,
devised fit tests, observed, and did the sums.

But analysed this apple has no taste.
Heat is mere movement of small particles.
And you are, my good friends, replaced
by unconsenting stacks of molecules.

As lines, squares, cubes—or x, x^2, x^3—
are different orders, similarly apart
are modes of knowing, to be grouped
as proper to the senses, reason, heart.

The heart has reasons reason does not know.
In us like rivers. *Rivers are moving roads*
that would take us where we want to go.
Even these torpid among Norfolk's Broads,

their names blunt Anglian, Bure, Yare, Ant, Thurne,
pragmatic villages where life enquires
means, not ends, moves taciturn,
flint churchtowers lacking visionary spires,

this afternoon's gold miles of stubble-field
proposing an accountant's universe
calculable in its yield—
all sense the sea, along which cars disperse.

We pause at Yarmouth: pier, bars, "Funland." Chris,
it's thirty years now since we first went to town
on the ideal; half-scared to kiss
real girls, bought for a laugh for half-a-crown

a six-inch rubber Jane Russell from a stall
that, squeezed, grew tits. While Joan, to reach a dance
you'd hitch wild miles through Donegal—
drunk mêlées in the ballrooms of romance.

You've settled here; your visitor, I live
in Ireland now. Willed quests? or quantum grace-
notes, siftings from some cosmic sieve?
Our species a chance stanza flung on space?

In our perplexities our definition
and essential being. Pascal, great
physicist and mathematician,
inventor of the earliest calculat-

ing machine, gap-leaper writing to Fermat,
Mathematics? I'd not step a metre for it;
thought's noblest practice; but only that,
having outstripped Europe, you ignore it.

For *our true study, man.* Until the pain
blossomed in your body, and you died.
The autopsy could not explain
the spiked belt next your skin reproving pride.

You'd scorn the glib ways we've conceptualised
ourselves since, breathing in like fuel-exhaust
narcotic jargons, desensitised
to our emotional truth. And built a vast

diversion-industry. The twig-limbed hosts
of famine gather on our screens, to set
full tables shuddering. Civic boasts
are scabbed with spreading slum graffiti. . . . Yet

as now, car parked, we stare—blue flux, curved beach—
a childhood is re-entered. Here I came,
to Corton, magically each
August. Is that ship out there the same

as 1947's? Freedom far
as eye can reach. . . . I clamber down, my hand
scrunching soft ochre cliffs; that are
the crumbling verge of smug recessive land.

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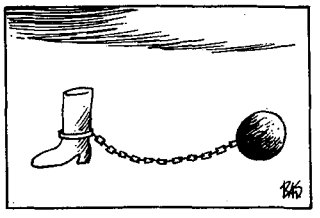
NOTES & TOPICS

End of a French Dogma?

By Jean-Claude Casanova



SINCE François Mitterrand's electoral victory in 1981, France has been the only great Western democracy which has increased the proportion of public ownership to the point of placing almost one-third of the nation's production under State control. This decision stems from the persistence of a dogma—belief in a principle unjustified by experience—which prevails inside the tradition-ridden Socialist Party, and stems from that Party's agreement with the Communists. The agreement no longer exists; and I have been told that the dogma is "on its last legs."

In the French tradition, nationalisation was supposed to improve conditions for the wage-earner, free the state of feudal hangovers, and facilitate progressive social policies. Wage-earners now know that it would serve their interests far better to put more reliance upon improved productivity. The gluttonous 20th-century state, far from being frail, is naturally prone to obesity. Who now believes that nationalisation is the key to technical progress, full employment, stable prices, and a favourable balance of payments? In order to discover these plain truths, the French had to wait for the state-owned Renault company to stop being "a social show-case." They might have remembered that the state had nationalised the telephones in 1889, and some 70 years later that service's incompetence was second to none.

Today's so-called "*dénationalisation rampante*" is merely a return to the reality principle. If public enterprises are to be better managed, we have to give them greater autonomy, restore their freedom to disband (a bitter lesson), and allow them to bring in private finance by selling subsidiaries or issuing intermediate securities between debentures and shares (an ironic lesson). The reality principle is related to electoral success: sensible management brings balanced books, and "good finances" can make "good voters."

The liberals (ancient or converted) are not divided on this problem. The Opposition is advertising its readiness to "denationalise" if it wins the 1986 elections; it is merely debating questions of procedure and priority. Still, one thing is certain: it will require a real measure of resolution. Large-scale privatisation entails the sale to the private sector of some 130 billion francs worth of shares. In five years, Britain, with a financial market five times larger than ours, has issued the equivalent of 85 billion francs worth of shares in order to denationalise.

Short of adopting other modes of transfer (such as free distribution of shares to company personnel and to institutions of collective public interest) the process will take time; and it will therefore entail convincing voters to give their backing for more than one electoral term.

SO THE DEBATE which is now under way must take its natural course. It cannot be cut short by mere polemics or circumstance. Since the Socialists are re-examining a traditional dogma, let them go through with their inquest; since the Opposition wants to win on this ground, let it think its principles all the way through. But I want to contribute to this discussion six theses which may clarify the new debate.

(*1*) Historical or international experience gives us no reason to conclude that public ownership has produced performances better than, or even equal to, those of private enterprise.

(*2*) Public enterprise has all the defects of the guilds under the *ancien régime*. Its status encourages it (particularly in the case of monopolies) to act for the benefit only of its own wage-earners and management, and hence to the detriment of the consumer; and to use more capital than is necessary, hence to the detriment of the economy as a whole.

(*3*) Large modern enterprises recruit their top managers by co-option, and this co-option is tempered by performance in the market. The power to make appointments exerts an irresistible attraction over the princes who rule us, and the ambition to be appointed obsesses those around them. In making appointments to leading jobs in the public sector, the state therefore obeys the logic of place-and-privilege. Even if it is well-intentioned or enlightened, it introduces into its managers' lives an uncertainty damaging to the interests of the enterprise. Compare this with the way in which companies like Philips, Shell, or IBM select their managers, organise their careers, and protect their freedom.

(*4*) Because the financial market constantly reviews and updates the valuation of private companies, their techniques can be improved and their people and capital better employed. For confirmation I would suggest that one need only consult the report recently published by the *Haut Conseil du secteur public*. Two volumes, 910 pages, and yet the crux of the matter is missing: namely, any comparison of the figures for French public enterprises with those available for foreign companies operating in the same sector. Only the open financial market can give a proper assessment, with a verdict reached by judges who take risks (by buying and selling shares) and who are informed by economic analyses from a variety of sources.

(*5*) Is it possible in public enterprises to prevent important decisions being subject to the will of the government? Now, the modern state is democratic, bureaucratic, and national; being democratic, it is sensitive to parties and elections. Is it desirable for enterprises to have to share such sensitivities? Since the state is bureaucratic, it offers power to offices and opportunities to office-holders in the public sector. It is merely national while enterprises are international. What would we say if a number of foreign countries, enlightened by

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our own progressive principles and ideological behaviour, were to nationalise the subsidiaries of our French public enterprises? Would we have to abandon our principles, or our interests?

(6) My final proposition is political. "*Le pouvoir arrête le pouvoir*", wrote Montesquieu in *De l'esprit des lois*. Power checks power. Anyone who agrees with that dictum will have to conclude that the classical separation between parliament, executive, and judiciary is no longer a sufficient guarantee of liberty; a free and critical press, free and independent trade unions, and free business enterprise are equally necessary. And I would suggest that, since private enterprise, freed from bureaucratic statism, is also the most efficient, here politics and economics coincide.

London Commentary

Kinnock's Way

By Edward Pearce

THE BRITISH political parties have come to that pretty pass where nobody knows which of them is going to win a General Election and indeed where the notion of any one of them obtaining the 326 seats necessary for an absolute majority looks increasingly remote.

The Conservatives, as I have argued in these pages, are now weighed down by a millstone leadership. Mrs Thatcher was once an asset in terms of her novel courage and frequent willingness (at British Leyland, in the pits and, for people who like that sort of thing, in the South Atlantic) to take up fights which the more politic run of Prime Ministers would have skipped. But in the process, as I suggested, she became lamentably authoritarian and her tone, never ingratiating, acquired a slate-pencil quality in which the other parties rejoice. Mrs Thatcher was, Mrs Thatcher is not!

Mr Kinnock, by contrast, has undergone an advantageous transformation. Perceived to be nice, good-humoured and amusing, he was also seen as verbose and featherweight, too much the *jeune premier*, a light-draught ship in very heavy seas. Bournemouth 1985, a Labour Party conference which will be quoted and alluded to for the rest of the century, has changed all that. It is not possible to overstate the courage and the substantial nature of that speech. This is so whether we are discussing the early Tory-bashing bits (which are old-style Kinnock but shorter-winded and sharper-edged) or the central part (which outlined his notions of the state), whose importance is that he urged Scandinavian not Marxist ends, and was sufficiently responsive to modern libertarian ideas to urge "a servant state, a state under the people's feet, not over their heads." Then of course we saw the final flame-throwing display directed at the Militant Tendency in Liverpool.

This last was a piece of perfect theatrical timing. One minute we thought we were traversing the sort of mild, beseeching request for restraint which has been sunk in derision at more Labour Party conferences than bear thinking about, the next we were into the machine-gunning of Mr Derek Hatton, the leader of Liverpool City Council, and a frontal assault on the emotional self-indulgence (a buzz-word which I expect to hear recurringly from the Kinnock camp) of those who practise Socialist Impossibilism and

> *Like Cato give their little senate laws,*
> *And sit attentive to their own applause.*

No one who broadly wishes the Conservatives well should subtract a farthing from the achievement of the Labour leader. It is insufficient to say that Hatton was a soft target; he was a lot softer after Kinnock hit him, and Scargill is as soft as steel toe-caps. In terms of electoral politics (and I enjoyed the Welsh sarcasm, "Can't have a political party thinking about electoral considerations, can we? That would be 'class treason', wouldn't it?"), Mr Kinnock has done himself all sorts of good.

There are truthful and honest reservations which *can* be made but not until one has also acknowledged the quality of the words. I have heard Mr Kinnock called a Welsh windbag too often, and indeed compression and verbal health-farming have been essential, but he should be given credit for loving the words he uses and using them gracefully. This man does not talk in clichés, still less in jargon. The cadence, increasingly right, actually helps convey his notion of a non-totalitarian, non-repressive party, which would probably spend too much money but would often spend it in honourable causes.

At which, alas, we light upon the reservations. First, this is an achievement so far confined to Kinnock himself, and acknowledged enthusiastically chiefly by the Parliamentary Party. He will of course have trade-union allies. But at this essential moment the two trade-union leaders who probably command most sympathy with the working electorate—Gavin Laird of the Engineers and the brusque but brilliant Eric Hammond ("Lions led by donkeys") of the Electricians—stand excellent chances of being expelled, with their unions, from the TUC. This will occur for reasons of petty, fatuous spite on the part of David Basnett, the most overrated man in public life, who has a long record of getting things wrong and whose private grudge, dating back to the Isle of Grain lagging dispute, put him into destructive alliance with the delighted Communist, Ken Gill, and with the hard men who ignore poor Ron Todd on the T & G executive. ENCOUNTER is not a family magazine, but the words which adequately describe the mess made by Mr Basnett of Labour and Trade Union unity on the issue of governmental secret ballot funds (see ENCOUNTER, November) had better not be used.

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That is only the beginning of it. A credible reform Labour Party, even one which retains unilateralism as its defence policy, has to depend on the Bournemouth mood being sustained by the courage of other people as well as Neil Kinnock; and, though he can inspire courage in others, that party has been terribly long attuned to the acceptance of bullying. I can cite an encounter between a Labour peer of some standing and a strong-minded Midlands MP, immediately after the first Kinnock speech. "Wasn't it terrific?" said the man from the Midlands. "Well, yes, it was very good", said his Lordship, "but I asked myself was it also wise?" "Oh, fuck off ", said the MP. Not everyone will be so robust in the face of an inbuilt feebleness assembled over the years. One recalls Harold Wilson's first and second responses to the Jones/Scanlon vituperation at his union-reform White Paper. They were respectively: "*Get your tanks off my lawn, Hughie*", and, after submission, "*This is a victory for all of us. . . .*"

The trade-union movement shows complex and not always easily discerned signs of improvement—the emergence of Mr Edmonds at the G & M, as I stubbornly still call the West African port of GMBATU, of Mr Alistair Graham for the public services, and others, but also all those favours done the trade-union movement with eyes wide open by Norman Tebbit. In legislating, Mr Tebbit preferred a balloted, legitimate, potentially strong group to the previous state of affairs.

Alas, nobody has reformed the T & G, which casts 1.25 million votes at the Labour Party conference, and whose General Secretary is comprehensively subordinated to his Executive. Ron Todd is seen by the Shadow Cabinet as a pleasant, decent, romantically emotional man who would respond to their overtures on Incomes Policy if he were a free agent and if persuasion were a matter only of him and his members. But neither condition obtains, so the T & G remains, in its chaotic, executive-dominated way, the ally of all those who wish to resist the economic undertaking which is a pre-condition of a Labour government working. Whatever words are finally extracted will be appended with contradictory subordinate clauses and written on rice-paper!

BEYOND POLICY, and all the efforts which Mr Roy Hattersley will make to render it credible, lies the psychology of a party for which office and treason are widely seen as coterminous. The point of hitting Liverpool's Hatton so hard, apart from the sheer pleasure of it, is that the managing, functioning part of Labour has lived so long with an atmosphere of hatred. It was essential to hate back. I went on the Monday night of the Bournemouth conference to a fringe meeting, attended by some 800 people, addressed by Arthur Scargill, Dennis Skinner, John MacDonald (betrayed by the centrist, opportunist rate-making of Ken Livingstone), Miss Joan Maynard, Miss Sharon Atkins, and Mr Tony Benn. Interestingly, the last party fell as flat on the activists as an overcooked vegetarian omelette. The audience, which had been in rhapsodic, hallelujah empathy with Arthur Scargill's blend of blue club comedian and herald of the resurrection, fell during Wedgie's time into a loud, dull, indifferent buzz of private talk. The tragedy of last year's ghoulie boring the baby can hardly be borne, and it couldn't happen to a nicer chap. But what emerged from this meeting (sponsored by *Labour Herald*, home of what we might call the unpleasant young things) was an appeal from one speaker that at certain points in the next day's debate they should "shout and stamp and scream." And so they did.

It is the recollection of shouting and stamping and screaming which one takes away from conference—as well as the good things like the speeches of John Smith or the girl from NUPE about to be made redundant by those taxis scuttling round Liverpool (she, incidentially, was so afraid of physical retaliation on the train that according to colleagues she sought a sympathetic car party to take her home by road), or the elegant and graceful short speech of Roy Hattersley, or indeed Neil Kinnock himself. Having spent my time in the hall, not in front of the screen, I await information on how much shouting, stamping and screaming filtered through on television. From where I was, it got very nasty indeed at times. "*You rat, you bloody rat*", addressed to Kinnock, was the least of it. "Give us guns and we'll shoot the bastard" was admittedly said at a fringe meeting, but it does not please. For we have to face, as the rational working mainstream of Labour has to face, at a closer, more unpleasant proximity, the fact that Labour—more than the Liberals, more than the Tories, infinitely more than the SDP—has a substantial minority of truly enraged, half-crazy people for whom shouting, screaming and stamping is understatement.

The Liberals have their ginger-bearded, whale-loving fringe. The Tories have (in office) the indescribable Mr Jeffrey Archer ("novelist" turned Tory drummer), who recently announced that there were jobs available in Northamptonshire, and that the unemployed "should get off their backsides and go to Wellingborough"—a Conservative emendation of "Take up thy bed and walk"—but in fairness the record of the Tories in detesting and swiftly excluding a nasty Right has been pretty good. Sarah Barker (who would never have let Derek Hatton so much as smell a membership application form) still lives in Smith Square. The Far Right are excluded, and Mr Archer appears as an error of taste, biting the heads off jelly-babies on radio until someone puts a cover on his cage.

Labour carries a burden of widely-perceived lunatic awfulness well within its fringe. The Kinnock speeches, though indisputably superb, were also the product of desperation. Only by turning, fighting, and breaking all the old rules about unity and conciliation, by refusing to be what that Labour peer called "wise", could he ever break out of the spiral of despair which oppresses a minority party half-hijacked by Fifth Monarchy men. Truly, since the late 1960s when Harold Wilson's economic policy collapsed, since the unions voted not to be reformed, since the sort of people whom Miss Barker as National Agent used to proscribe came to sit on the leader's shoulder, *no one* has led the Labour Party.

Mr James Callaghan's short efflorescence of good sense was a government affair, capable of taking place only behind the stockade of (deeply welcome) American control of the economy through the instrument of the International

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Monetary Fund. It was alibi politics. Alone, in Opposition, Labour could not stand; and we are waiting to see if after all his golden words are spent, Mr Kinnock will be able to help his party to its feet.

THERE ARE TOO MANY sophistications of what we call the Left for any certainty. There is the Liverpool *Militant* element, which certainly can be controlled. There is the old essentially Soviet-minded Left which, in view of the disintegration of the British CP, ought not to matter, but which sits behind the romantic Ron Todd on the Executive of the T & G, exercising far too much power. There is what might be called the *Realpolitik* Left—David Blunkett and Ken Livingstone, who combine great talents with recently amended political positions, and both of whom had, until Tuesday, 1 October, prospects for the leadership of the Labour Party.

The amenders and qualifiers are, however little they like the idea, very much Mrs Thatcher's children. For although that lady may be burned out as a political force, she has singed them as well. Despite the defiance, the one year's victory and the respite for the GLC, these local-government people made a rate. The union leaders on the Left—like Clive Jenkins—who want no destructive explosion over ballot funds, are in an analogous position. The unions are themselves amended. The political spectrum in recent years has become a Rightward-leaning parallelogram, with the parties of the Left accommodating themselves to things unimaginable ten years ago, such as the fact that there are now three parties, and that dislike of the union leaders' old peremptory power is an acknowledged political force.

Something else hangs over British politics, though only a few technical experts make the point. Trends are becoming regionalised. Labour lives by its laager in Scotland, the North-east, and South Wales, but is dead, deceased, and has passed on, like Monty Python's parrot, in the South-west, East Anglia, and the Suburbs.

It is for this reason that I would not expect all Neil Kinnock's piety and wit to carry his party beyond the level of 270 seats. By the same reckoning, the Tories—having slain, not the dragon but the useful bogey—find themselves with only two Labour seats between Hounslow and Land's End and between Dover and the Wash. Those who vote Conservative to keep Labour out, have in those regions infinitely less reason to do so. The Alliance candidate trying hard in the sweet places of England could well be on double-ply velvet.

SUPPOSE THAT THERE ARE 150 seats for the Alliance in the next Parliament, something which by-elections would help bring about, how will they and the 270 Labour members I suggest as likely, cooperate? "In no circumstances whatever will Labour enter a coalition with the Alliance, though it is thinkable, just thinkable, that we might do something with the Liberals alone." That was the view of one prominent member of the Shadow Cabinet, privately at Bournemouth. "Our duty is to fight against, abuse, and make war upon the Alliance until the moment the polls close, and then see what can be done with them", said another dominant figure in that body.

The real prospect for British politics in the looming post-Thatcher era is of sophisticated number-crunching, more "betrayals" than Derek Hatton dreams of, and a long period of Belgian/Italian/Danish uncertainty. It is a wonderful system, and once every 30 years or so one may get a Craxi or a De Gasperi who knows how to play it. Otherwise politicians, never that important at the best of times, may find themselves hideously sidelined by circumstance, while such powers as he may not already possess fall gratefully to Sir Humphrey (that only partly parodic Civil Servant in the TV satire *Yes Minister*). And that is not what Dr Owen, Mr Kinnock, Mr Hatton or the Transport & General Workers Executive, any of them, quite intended.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Procrustean Man

IN ORDER TO understand the machinery of the Soviet universe and of Communist societies in general, clearly the first requirement is to reconstitute their history, together with their political, economic, military and cultural structures. The historian and politologist Michel Heller (formerly a Soviet citizen, now living and teaching in France since 1969) has already provided us with just such a synthesis in the shape of his *Utopie au pouvoir* (1982), indubitably a modern classic. But in order to understand the Soviet universe, there is one more thing which has to be grasped, and that is the formation, or rather the breaking-in, of "Soviet man."

Right from the start of the régime, the Bolsheviks freely declared that their goal was not confined to mere economic and social reform, no matter how radical, but consisted above all in the creation of a *new man*. This meant excising from the supposedly obsolete model his ways of thinking, social and family manners, religion, culture, even his habits of working, so as to produce a *Homo Sovieticus* destined to dethrone and replace *homo sapiens*.

It is the story of that process of dismantling and rebuilding which Michel Heller retraces, with a mastery of broad design equalled by precision of concrete detail in the petty daily facts of Soviet totalitarianism. Stalin said: "Soviet man is a cog-wheel", and thirty years later Khrushchev repeated the idea to define his own mission: "Somebody has to take care of the

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cog-wheels." Hence the title of Heller's book, *La machine et les rouages*,[1] for *Homo Sovieticus* must only exist, can only exist, as a cog in the machinery of the Party-State.

"Socialist education" therefore aims to hollow out its subjects with a view to refilling and remodelling them to accord with the new society. This programme does not date merely from the triumph of Stalinism; it goes back to Lenin, Bukharin, and Trotsky. "Physical Liquidations" (in the physical, murderous sense) and the first "re-education" labour camps made their appearance as early as 1918, as did the *Cheka* secret police.

There is nothing specifically Russian about this process: it is found at the source of all the Communist régimes. In Mozambique, Samora Machel proclaimed in 1976: "We are fighting a class struggle to create a new man!" This obsession with the forcible transformation of human nature recurs in leaderships from Albania to Viet Nam, from Mao to Castro. It went to its logical extreme with the appalling violence of the Khmers Rouges. What we have here is not the outcome of some particular historical tradition, but an ideological fact which is everywhere much the same, whatever the national context.

Why? Perhaps in part because the leaders of the Party-State rapidly come to realise that their system, far from regenerating life, is making it worse. Unable to improve the reality, the Communist leaders set about transforming the way it is perceived. They force the people to find it good, and condition them to that end. This is the reason why, in Michel Heller's words, "the history of the Soviet Union can ultimately be brought down to the history of the formation of Soviet man." Heller describes in detail the various processes which make up this formation, this infantilisation. What methods have been used in the manufacture of dependent man?

First of all, to break him on the apocalyptic wheel of forced collectivisation and terror, these stocks which remain indelibly engraved on the collective. The first was only an important stage in a never-ending campaign of destruction waged against every sphere of private autonomy—the family, religion, culture, work, education, travel, knowledge, research. As for Stalin's "Great Terror" of 1936-38, it constituted the visible paroxysm of an endemic, less conspicuous terror aimed at keeping Soviet man in a state of constant fear. Every Soviet citizen must feel potentially guilty.

And so he is! For the Soviet economy is so disorganised that the ordinary citizen can survive only by putting himself in chronic breach of the Soviet law. Without the black market, corruption, theft from the workplace and contrived absenteeism, how would it ever be possible for him to feed, clothe and house himself, get proper medical treatment, repair his most ordinary tools or household equipment, or find time to join the necessary queues? Thus at every instant, and at the whim of the authorities, the Soviet citizen may find himself subject to questioning and arrest for being the offender that his circumstances compel him to be. This is all the more easy because every citizen is equally compelled to become an informer and therefore lives surrounded by informers.

Most Western observers did not understand, when Andropov decided to fight "idleness" and corruption, that it was not the economic efficiency of the country he had in mind, but a recurrent scenario of repression. Andropov knew very well that the tacit acceptance of poor work is part of the system. As for corruption, in a régime where the State is everything, corruption is everywhere. To root it out, it would be necessary to start by arresting the 18 million members of the Soviet CP. What naïve observers took for an "economic reform" was really only a police intimidation operation. Andropov was in a good position to know that the Soviet economy is imperfectible, at least without jeopardising the political equilibrium of the system.

> "The Soviet system is like an egg [Michael Heller writes], perfectly adapted to its function, but impossible to alter without breaking it."

And he adds, in another illuminating and lapidary formulation:

> "The vices of the country's economy are the very qualities of its political system."

Universal planning also illustrates this principle. Contrary to some naive Western beliefs, the Soviet five-year plans have no economic function. The achievement and even the (obligatory) "exceeding" of the plan are statistical fictions. Their true function is personnel training and control. Each enterprise, each establishment, factory, *kolkhoz*, hospital, restaurant, school, prison, camp, has its plan, dictated by the Party. A French Minister of Education on a visit to Moscow was naively impressed to learn that only 0.5% of pupils had to stay in their grade for two years running. Some achievement, considering that every teacher has to fulfil his own "plan", and that means giving good marks to nearly all his pupils, in order to underline the high rate of academic productivity and scholastic yield! It is true, as *Pravda* itself observed (on 14 April 1984), that "the intangible foundation of Communist education consists in developing in the learner a Marxist-Leninist conception of the world."[2]

But could that system, I wonder, have been imposed for so long upon one-third of mankind unless some secret kernel of totalitarianism lay at the heart of every human being? Michel Heller does not deal with this painful question, although he raises it. He points out for example, that *Sov-speak* has become the Esperanto of international politics, even among those who are not obliged to use it. Wasn't the first hagiography of Stalin, an abject hymn to tyranny, written by Henri Barbusse, a citizen of a free country? So great is the economic

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[1] *La machine et les rouages*. By Michel Heller. Translated from the Russian. Calmann-Lévy.

[2] The recent, and fraudulent, interrupton of a world chess championship becomes more understandable in view of the fact that, for the Soviet CP, the game of chess is also very much part of the power system. As early as 1932, N. Krylenko told the Congress of the Soviet Chess Federation: "We must have done with neutrality in chess! We must immediately begin to institute a five-year plan. . . ."

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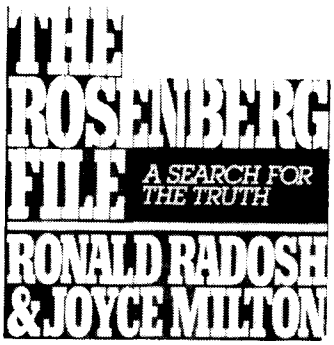
and cultural failure of communism that its political success through new means totally external to its victims becomes even more inexplicable.

A Looking-Glass Affair



At the time of the execution for espionage in the United States of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, in June 1953, European public opinion was in little doubt about the innocence of the victims. If one turns back to the newspapers of the day, it is hard to see how people could have imagined any other hypothesis. The indignation reached a level of virulence which precipitated a long-lasting anti-Americanism. "*L'Amerique avait la rage* (America had 'rabies')", Sartre said: The Rosenbergs were victims of the Cold War.

The French translation of Radosh and Milton's book The Rosenberg File (1983)[1] will satisfy those European readers who still believe in impartiality. It also reminds us that this particular virtue does not quite operate in a vacuum: it presupposes work, research, cross-checking, the comparison of documentary sources. The authors have re-examined all the documents and evidence previously known, consulted unpublished archives made recently accessible, and questioned the surviving participants.

As far as I am concerned this comprehensive overview spells out (*1*) the massive and conclusive guilt of Julius Rosenberg and (*2*) that the special political climate played a major role in their death-sentence and execution, iniquitous especially in Ethel's case. On the basis of their own investigation the authors are practically certain of her personal complicity, but the fact remains that the trial did not produce the formal proof. Considering the ambiguity of the American laws on espionage and on treason in peace-time, President Eisenhower owed it to himself to pardon the condemned Mrs Ethel Rosenberg at any rate.

Why did he refuse? In order to understand his reasons, if not to accept them, we must start by getting used to the dramatic idea that the espionage network to which Rosenberg belonged really existed. It included nuclear physicists working at the heart of American atomic research centres. The most famous of them, Klaus Fuchs, operating in Britain at the Harwell Centre, should not be allowed to overshadow the existence of other valuable agents, two of whom miraculously slipped away after the Rosenbergs' arrest and crossed the Iron Curtain of the day to go on to pursue humdrum scientific careers in the USSR, under false names. David Greenglass, the brother-in-law of Julius Rosenberg, and future informer against him, was a technician at Los Alamos who provided the Soviets with precious military information. Because of his subordinate function, this was denied by sceptics for a long time; but Radosh and Milton show how an ordinary mechanic could collect a mass of valuable data. When we recall, furthermore, that the British liaison officer in Washington for counter-espionage was Kim Philby, the king of moles, who was meticulously informing the *KGB* about the plans of the *FBI*, we have to agree that the Americans did not need exactly to suffer from "paranoia" in order to feel that they were major targets for serious infiltration.

Still, on both sides behaviour was too often dictated by blind emotions and cynical calculations. The American legal authorities were banking on their own intransigence to force the Rosenbergs to confess and by betraying other accomplices contrive to save their own skins. The Communists feared precisely the same thing, and cared very little about having the trial appealed, reviewed, retried. Communist Parties throughout the world did not mobilise themselves for the campaign in favour of the Rosenbergs until a year-and-a-half after the sentence. They launched their demonstration in the autumn of 1952. It was the eve of the Slansky trial in Prague.

In the French preface, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie does well to stress that the Rosenberg affair had nothing in common with *l'affaire* Dreyfus with which it has often been superficially compared. He unravels the intricacies of a sinister trial of strength in which there were no innocents. It was a propaganda contest which was won by the Soviets, because world opinion was persuaded to believe the story of a miscarriage of justice, a frame-up, a judicial error. In the excitement of the day it forgot that there had been an unquestionable case of espionage and treason.

[1] *Dossier Rosenberg*. By Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton. Hachette-Littérature.

Hateful Individualism

If the term "individualism" had appeared in the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, one could hazard a guess that Flaubert would have added the comment: "*Toujours forcené* (Always rabid)." No epithet recurs with such pounding frequency, among all the stern qualifiers that pepper the diatribes inveighing against that ruinous vice, that solitary practice, *l'individualisme*.

Almost unanimously, the French denounce the ravages of this scourge of consciousness. Nothing, it seems, has done us more harm or threatens us with worse disasters—so we are stunned to discover, thanks to Alain Laurent's new book,[1] which is a model both of the history of ideas and of their analysis.

[1] *De l'individualisme*. By Alain Laurent. Presses Univ. de France.

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Ever since the 19th century the philosophical, political and religious texts of both the Left and the Right have teemed with anathemas against individualism. The decade of the 1970s renewed the intensity of the anti-individualist ideology, which continues to jam all the wave-lengths of political thought, irrespective of their origins. On the extreme Right, a tradition which stems from Joseph de Maistre and Bonald denies any existence to the individual, except as one of the building-blocks of the *édifice social*—a notion taken up again and reinforced by Auguste Comte and by the present-day *nouvelle droite*, which has established the virulent condemnation of individualism as a permanent theme.

But elsewhere we find similar voices—I mention authorities as various as Jacques Delors, Louis Mermaz, Roger-Gérard Schwartzenberg, Brice Lalonde, the *situationiste* Raoul Vaneigem, Louis Aragon and Roger Garaudy, Sartre and Foucault, Edmond Maire, Régis Debray and Raymond Barre, *le Conseil permanent de l'épiscopat*, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Simone Veil and Jacques Chirac—all talking (and thinking) heads tossed up from among a countless herd, all of them berating individualism with more or less identical accents. Here Laurent's book provides an instructive anthology of broadly researched quotations which chart the progress of a curious phobia.

The indictment of individualism depends on the constant regurgitation of a small crop of clichés. "Turning in on itself" inside its "ivory tower", it leads to the "atomisation of society." The accusation of "egoism" and "corrosive narcissism" derives from a philosophy of "*groupisme*." Whole must take precedence over part, the collective over the particular. For Philippe Pétain, in 1940, the nation has to understand that "*l'individualisme est à l'origine des maux dont il a failli mourir* (individualism is at the root of the evils of which it almost died)." On the Left, individualism is attacked as the product of capitalism, of bourgeois morality, and of the cash nexus. Returning from China in 1973, *le père* Cardonnel considers as "unhealthy, corrupt, and even vicious that notion of individual freedom in whose terms the state of affairs in China is judged as totalitarian. . . ." A current of Christian thinking which harks back to Emmanuel Mounier (and beyond) rejects individualism and liberalism in favour of a "communal personalism." The author of the *Projet socialiste* of 1979 likewise castigates "the exacerbation of individualism", in which he detects, by a process too tortuous for me to follow, an "underhand and stealthy social totalitarianism."

THERE IS A dumbfounding intellectual poverty in this long litany. Since Constant and Tocqueville it has been unusual to observe an original French reflection on the relationship of the individual with society or state. Recently the theme has revived. The most recent works of Michel Foucault, the Foucault of *Le souci de soi*, have tried to reconstruct a thousand years of philosophical thought which teaches *la réalisation de soi-même*, self-realisation, not as a rejection but as a condition of sociability. Sociologists like François Bourricaud and Raymond Boudon have pointed out, in the Tocqueville tradition, that in the final analysis the socially decisive actor must always be the individual.

It is an interesting sign of the times that the Left has leapt on board this latest bandwagon to explain, *bien sûr*, that the truest individualism is indeed socialism. All the same, let us not be deceived into believing that the reaffirmation of the individual goes very far. Even Gilles Lipovetsky's essay, *L'ère du vide* (1983)—which was read by French critics as a sort of manifesto of contemporary individualism—describes today's individuals as indifferent, rather vacuous narcissists. That's only giving ammunition to the demolition gang.

Do you have to be a sheep, or an ant, in order to become a citizen? Do you have to give up "being yourself" in order to feel kinship with others? Alain Laurent puts the question, and demonstrates forcefully that we must refuse to fall into this trap. How can one build a free society with slaves?

J-F. R.

New Footnote to an Old Argument

By E. J. Mishan

THE ARGUMENT took place a long time ago (actually it's only eleven years), and he was not yet Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Following the publication of my article, "The New Inflation" (ENCOUNTER, May 1974), Mr Nigel Lawson summed up his position by quoting passages from that article and drawing a conclusion (his commentary appeared on pp. 88-92 of the August 1974 issue of ENCOUNTER). The points at issue are, I think, worth recalling.

Why, I had asked,

> "may it no longer be possible to apply fiscal and monetary measures so as eventually to stabilise prices or, at least, reduce significantly the rate of inflation experienced over the last two or three years?
>
> . . . the answer may be found in the growing power of organised labour over the last thirty years, and its awareness of that power. The ease with which the trade unions (or, for that matter, any determined group of workmen) are able to exert pressure on employers and on the public has, of course, been facilitated by the larger size of industrial plant [and by nationalisation]. . . . But even without any growth in the size of industrial plant or in the extent of nationalisation . . . any disruption of the flow of products or services from the industry as a whole, whether by strike action, 'working to rule', or other methods, will be suffered by the general public who, it is assumed, will always favour a speedy settlement through existing arbitration machinery or, in the last resort (which last

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resort is never far off today), through government intervention."

Therefore,

"Each union or organised group . . . realises that the concessions it can wring from society depend ultimately on the extent of the potential disruption it can inflict on the community. . . . For the economy as a whole, the exercise is not only futile but wasteful of energy. Yet, though true for 'the economy as a whole', it is not true for each particular segment of it. If the widget-makers' union receives a pay increase in excess of the average, then it does indeed improve its position in real terms and in the general pay-structure, notwithstanding the consequent rise in widget prices. The widget-makers' union knows this. So does every other union,"

But could not fiscal and monetary measures stabilise prices and reduce the rate of inflation?

"The orthodox argument is that a refusal by the authorities to expand the quantity of money any further, or their determination to reduce the quantity of money, will eventually make it impossible for employers to grant wages increases even if they are otherwise willing to do so. But if, following such a contingency, workers (though aware of the financial inability of the industry to meet their wage claims) remain adamant in 'working to rule', or in refusing to return to work, what then? With the central bank under the control of the government of the day, their persistence in strike action has now to be interpreted as a form of direct pressure on the government to reverse its monetary decisions."

This pressure is very effective because

"In a liberal democratic society, no political party wants to be associated by the electorate with continued industrial unrest or prolonged inconvenience (especially if an election is in the offing). And since it also does not wish its term of office to be associated with severe and protracted unemployment, the government of the day is tempted to seek concessional formulae rather than lay off workers in the face of exorbitant demands."

I concluded that

"we seem to have reached a stage where we have to make a political choice between price stability and maintaining traditional freedoms—to the extent, at least, of leaving intact the existing power of trade unions and shop stewards. Certainly, price stability, the welfare state, and free collective bargaining are no longer mutually compatible."

Nigel Lawson, having cited these excerpts from my article, apparently agreed with that part of my analysis.

"This is indeed the political choice before us; and the obvious conclusion is that, if we are serious about halting the new inflation, there is nothing for it but to curb, or at least deter, by a series of carefully-chosen legislative measures, trade-union and shop-steward power. Yet this is not the conclusion reached by Mishan—perhaps (although he nowhere says this explicitly) because he regards any such action as politically impossible. Certainly, such modest attempts as have already been made—both by the previous Labour Government in 1969 and by the Conservative Government of 1970-74—demonstrate that it will be acutely difficult. But it cannot simply be dismissed as impossible; even though, such is the present power of the unions, we may well need a National Government, in the sense of a genuine coalition drawn from both major parties, to do the job."

It is of particular interest to note that, contrary to the popular monetarist view, which regards inflation as primarily a monetary phenomenon and rejects as naive the notion of a wage-push inflation, Nigel Lawson agreed at the time with my thesis to the extent, at least, of discovering in the then-growing militancy of labour the proximate cause of the inflation. In contrast, therefore, to uncompromising monetarists (represented at that time by Mr Enoch Powell who, in a Commons debate, went so far as to declare the trade unions to be as innocent and "pure as the driven snow"), Mr Lawson did not propose measures to control the growth of the money supply. Instead he suggested legislation designed to curb trade-union power.

While one can only guess at the reasons for Mr Lawson's conversion to the monetarist faith, it must have taken place not later than 1979 when he became Financial Secretary in Mrs Thatcher's first government. Indeed, he is thought to be the chief architect of the government's *Medium Term Financial Strategy* of 1980 which by planning to curb the growth of the money supply, of government spending, and of the national debt, over the next five years sought to bring down the rate of inflation and also to lower interest rates and the ratio of tax revenue to GDP. Although it has so far failed in the latter two objectives, the government did succeed in its more important objective, that of reducing the rate of inflation—running at a rate close to 20% at its peak in 1980—to about 5% by 1984.

The explanation of the Government's success in bringing the rate of inflation under control is open to interpretation. Mr Lawson would not presumably attribute it today to effective trade-union legislation. There have, in any case, been no effective new controls on trade-union activities introduced by the government, notwithstanding the legislation aimed to prohibit "secondary picketing." In so far as Mr Lawson subscribes to monetarist theory, he is bound to attribute the government's success in combating inflation to its unremitting endeavours to reduce the growth of the money supply (however defined).

The most plausible explanation of the government's success, however, is one that is politically unpalatable to ministers. It is the one implied in a paragraph of my article which Mr Lawson omitted to cite in the course of his critique. The paragraph in question reads:

"In the absence of wide-ranging controls on capital and

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> labour (which are thought to be politically unacceptable except in dire emergencies) one does not have to be a pessimist to suspect that only *prolonged and widespread unemployment, comparable with that experienced in the 1930s, would today suffice to break the psychological momentum acquired by the inflationary process over the last two decades*." (Italics added).

And surely the government's success in wringing so much inflation out of the economy in its first four years is directly attributable to the unemployment figure of over three million. It was in fact "prolonged and widespread unemployment, comparable with that experienced in the 1930s" that acted over time to damp the militancy of organised labour; in effect breaking "the psychological momentum acquired by the inflationary process."

If this is the case, then only to the extent that the government's economic strategy itself contributed, in the circumstances, to generating this massive level of unemployment may the government claim the credit for abating the high rate of inflation.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, while the government usurps the credit for the decline in inflation, it continues to resist the more obvious explanation. As ministers never tire of explaining to a sceptical public, the unemployment that grew under their term of office is not to be regarded as a necessary result of the government's more stringent monetary controls but the result rather of workers "pricing themselves out of the market." Although in a sense true, the phrase has about it a tang of (methodological) sophistry. For, in the event, the rate of inflation is reduced by a policy of accepting the additional unemployment in each period that is necessary to bring down wage-claims to those commensurate with the smaller amounts of money being made available to the economy.

This phrase about workers choosing to "price themselves out of the market" also suggests that the government did not foresee the full implications of the strategy adopted. Certainly, in its 1980 manifesto there was no forecast of three million unemployed as being part of the cost to the nation of bringing down the inflation rate.

The omission does not bespeak deviousness but, in my view, simple ignorance. The unemployment figure which was to accompany the decline in the rate of inflation could not in fact be predicted. For there is nothing in monetary theory—whether or not it draws inspiration from the so-called "Phillips Curve"—that establishes a dependable relation (or trade-off) between the decline in the rate of inflation and the proportion increase in unemployment.

Possibly some of the more worldly members of the cabinet expected the worst. But if so, they kept it to themselves and hoped for the best.

Residues

My mother dying left a wardrobeful,
A world half-worn, half-new:
Old-fashioned underclothes; a row of shoes,
Soles upward, staring; tangles of rings,
Impatient opals, bargain bangles, pearls;
And, flowered or jazzy, rayon, cotton, tulle,
A hundred dresses, waiting.

Left with that ragged past
My poor truncated father sold the lot.
What could he do? The dealer shrugged, and said
"Take it or leave it—up to you." He took
And lost the fiver at the races.
The empty wardrobe stared at him for years.

My father dying left a pack of cards,
A presentation clock, a cardboard box
Half-filled with his identity; no books,
No letters. His truncated past
Whisked from my hands, he stepped aside, was gone,
Leaving no litter.

And I, on dying? For my sons, my wife,
My house, my rows of books, my piles of papers,
My mother's letters and my father's clock:
My residue imposing on them all?
Too much, too much. . . .

Laurence Lerner

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Sartre & the Mice

A Reputation Reconsidered—By RONALD HAYMAN

"HE READS a great deal; he works with an extraordinary intensity, and has a critical talent which sometimes degenerates into arrogant dialectics; but he finishes nothing. He interrupts everything, always plunging back into an infinite sea of books. With his learned disposition he belongs totally to the German world, but his revolutionary style of thinking excludes him from it."

This is not a 20th-century Frenchman complaining about Jean-Paul Sartre, but a German editor, Arnold Ruge, writing on 15 May 1844 about Karl Marx's procrastination over articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Many of his books, too, were left unfinished. Writing in 1859 about his collaboration with Engels in 1844 on *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, Marx said they had "abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly as we had achieved our main purpose—self-clarification."

The motivation of any good writer is divided between self-clarification and communication; the longer the gap between starting work and publishing the results, the greater the danger of dissatisfaction with them. Post-Hegelian philosophers are particularly vulnerable when, like Marx and Sartre, they have become addicted to Hegel's habit of dialectical reversal. Would some of their own conclusions benefit from being turned upside down? Should publication be postponed? *Die Deutsche Ideologie* was itself an attempt "to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience", and Marx's failure to finish books reflected a continuing pattern of ambivalence towards his own work, uncertainty whether he had taken it far enough. Perhaps it is tomorrow's truth, not today's, that can be built on the ruins of yesterday's mistakes.

He also found it difficult to keep his sights trained on a single target. His 1841 doctoral thesis on Democritus and Epicurus was announced as preliminary to a larger essay on late classical philosophy; the 1844 Manuscripts were to be the first in a series of critiques on the subjects treated in Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie*; in 1857-58 the *Grundrisse* was written hastily, not for publication; in 1860 the quarrel with Carl Vogt provided a pretext for failing to develop *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1859) into a definitive work; after this, Marx published no major book until the first volume of *Das Kapital* appeared in 1867. He lived on until 1883, but the second and third volumes came out posthumously; editing them, Engels had to use notes and drafts dating from the 1860s.

Though Sartre wrote faster and with greater facility, he had a deep temperamental affinity with Marx. The lifelong aversion of both men to the bourgeoisie and to conventional morality derived partly from boyhood domination by an exceptional man—Marx's father, Sartre's grandfather.

Marx and Sartre both tended to define their positions by attacking those of other people and then to change their own by repudiating former convictions; both fought hard to abolish the dualism between mind and external reality. Both tried to help the working class by writing theoretical works; both hated idealism, and both failed to disentangle themselves from it while struggling to bring their thinking closer to economic actuality. "When reality is depicted", Marx maintained, "philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its existence." It is replaced by "abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men." This could serve as a summary of Sartre's progress from his early preoccupation with consciousness and ontology to the sociological abstractions of his *Critique de la raison dialectique*.

While working on it he spoke of a "race against the clock", but his mind was so fertile that in all his major projects the real race was against the alternative idea that might persuade him either to abandon one book in favour of another, or to drag the book away from the original concept. His masterpiece, *La Nausée*, was conceived as a piece of philosophical non-fiction, *Factum sur la contingence*, with the chestnut tree as a symbol of contingency, and with illustrative sequences featuring the district of Le Havre where he was living. Simone de Beauvoir, convinced of his genius for fiction, urged him to make the book into a novel, and her influence may have been crucial. He decided to call it *Melancholia* (after the Dürer engraving) and some 1932 notes—in an exercise book he used while teaching—point to his preoccupation with the difference between stories and actuality, in which the feeling of adventure comes retrospectively. One of the main climaxes of the resultant

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novel, published in 1938, dramatises Antoine Roquentin's decision to abandon the historical biography he has been writing. He feels an exquisite mixture of pleasure and pain.

> "The true nature of the present stood revealed: it was what exists, and everything which wasn't present didn't exist. The past didn't exist. . . . For me the past was only a retreat: it was another way of living, a holiday, passivity."

But he can picture his subject, the Marquis de Rollebon, more vividly than he could when intending to write about him. "I sighed, let myself lean back against my chair with a feeling of unbearable deprivation."

I CANNOT BELIEVE that anyone has ever written more greedily or more sensually than Sartre did; even when he was in his twenties, his satisfaction when a woman yielded her virginity to him was rivalled by the satisfaction of describing the event. The bedroom bulletins he wrote to his confidante, Simone de Beauvoir, convey the impression that before withdrawing he was already forming phrases he would use in detailing his moment-to-moment experience. When he was writing letters and diaries, the pleasure was unalloyed, but when he committed himself to a major project it was tarnished not only by the alternative project which would be clamouring for his attention but by guilt feelings about taking another holiday in the past. Even *la littérature engagée* involves a rejection of the present, a partial abdication from the possibility of changing the future by constructive action.

Though disinclined to retreat, like his grandfather, into a book-lined room, often writing instead in a busy café, Sartre was preserving the present moment in the aspic of literature instead of fusing his consciousness generously with that of the group. His childhood fantasies of himself as a man of action extended into abortive adult adventures in the Resistance and in practical politics. He always came back to the reluctant recognition that he was a man of letters, but pleasure in writing was accompanied by extreme tension. In a 1969 interview he said that what he had written was "exactly the contrary to what I wanted to write." He felt as though he had spent a major part of his life working like a hack, to commission, or, like a journalist, in response to current events. However inaccurate it was in itself, this feeling is relevant to all those moments of tension which had been prefigured by Roquentin's decision to abandon his biography —moments of reluctantly fending off a seductive project to keep faith with the one in hand, or moments of deliciously treacherous capitulation.

Had Sartre been determined to avoid the pleasurable pain of such moments, he could have undertaken more short-term projects, but he loved to make plans on the grand scale. The success of *La Nausée* changed his life: after seven years as a schoolteacher, he could at last, in his thirty-fourth year, become a full-time writer, but he never produced another self-contained novel. In the autumn of 1938, when he started his tetralogy *Les Chemins de la liberté*, he was envisaging a future in which fiction would emerge side by side with

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1983-84 (1403-04)

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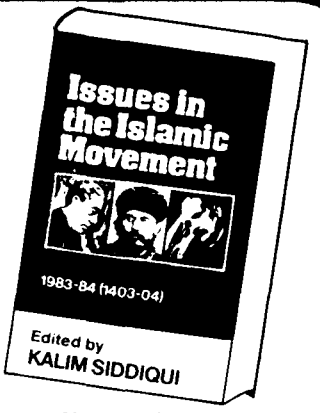

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philosophy. He would have preferred to express all his ideas in either stories or novels, he told an interviewer, but "there are things which are too technical, demanding a purely philosophical vocabulary." He was viewing his fiction as a three-phase enterprise. In the first phase, *La Nausée*, he had tried to expose the "stuff of existence." The five short stories written in 1936-38 and published in *Le Mur* were intended to show individuals handling that stuff in a series of unsuccessful attempts to get away from it—in each case a wall blocks the escape from reality.

THE SCHEME FOR *Les Chemins de la liberté* was more ambitious: it was going to centre on Antoine Roquentin, who would discover his liberty only when enlistment deprived him of it. On being demobilised he would be ready for the pleasures of the *acte gratuit*. At the same time Sartre was intent on proving himself to be less of a pessimist than *La Nausée* had made him seem: "You'll find existence rehabilitated, and my hero will act, will taste what existence is like." As Sartre had anticipated, war broke out, but, as always, he had failed to anticipate how much he would want to deviate from the original conception. After making Roquentin into Mathieu and publishing three stylistically discontinuous volumes, the last of which appeared in 1949, he wrote 223 pages of the final volume, *La Dernière chance*, and he did not abandon it until about 1958. In a 1959 interview he said that one of his main reasons for returning to the theatre with *Les Séquestrés d'Altona* was frustration at being unable to finish his novel.

> "I can't express the ambiguities of our period in this novel, which is set in 1943. On the other hand, this unfinished work weighs down on me: I find it difficult to start another novel without having finished this one."

But these 223 pages constitute only a small proportion of what he was ultimately to leave for the mice or for his adopted daughter, Arlette Elkaïm, to rescue from them. After he had written *L'Être et le Néant* rapidly in 1942, it was published in 1943 with the promise that he would follow it with an ethics. He went on until 1949 struggling with the problem of goodness in notebooks which contain even more words than *L'Être et le Néant*, while the unfinished second volume of his *Critique de la raison dialectique* contains about 200,000 words in a 781-page manuscript. Other uncompleted projects included the enormous biography of Flaubert, an autobiography, a phenomenological psychology, *Le Psyché*, a book on Mallarmé, a book on Tintoretto, and *Les Communistes et la paix*, an apologia for the Party, abandoned in 1956 after Soviet tanks crushed the rising in Budapest. In the unpublished second volume of the *Critique* he spoke of undertaking a separate "anthropological" work to demonstrate the truth of dialectical materialism. He also intended to write a "political testament", and in 1975, after his eyesight had deteriorated too badly for him to go on writing, he started working collaboratively with Benny Lévy (otherwise known as Pierre Victor) on *Pouvoir et liberté*, a book which was still not finished when Sartre died in 1980. Not that he had surrendered willingly to the habit of abandoning projects. Within a year of starting on the Flaubert biography he had written about a thousand pages. He then shelved it but soon, reacting angrily against his own habit of abandoning books, went back to it, only to shelve it again before writing the volume about *Madame Bovary*.

THOUGH THE NARRATIVE IN *La Nausée* celebrates the character's decision to abandon his book, no one could have predicted that the majority of Sartre's major projects would remain unfinished, and when he published *L'Être et le Néant* no one would have found anything ominous in his choice of an unfinished book to illustrate the relationship between the task that stretches into the future and the freedom available in the present. It is the obvious example, the one which lies nearest to hand. Sartre's point is that the "liberty which declares itself through anguish" is characterised by "the constantly recurring obligation to recreate the self." There I am, waiting for the book I'm writing to fill the space I've sketched out for it, waiting for myself in the future; "anguish is the anxiety that I won't be there to keep the appointment." The choice is always mine.

> "At any moment I can turn aside from my work, push the notebook aside, screw the cap on my fountain pen. . . . I have constituted myself in such a way that it is impossible to *understand me* without realising that this book *has been* my essential possibility . . . but *nothing*, not even what I have been, can force me to write it. . . . I discover that the permanent possibility of abandoning the book conditions the possibility of writing it, while giving my liberty its meaning."

In the present and in the future, freedom is the ability to replace the old self with a new one. This idea appealed to Sartre. In a 1939 notebook he uses the image of a snake sloughing off its skin: to take stock of oneself in a diary is to look back at the dead skin left behind. The idea of metamorphosis reappears in the second, unfinished volume of the *Critique* when Sartre discusses Stalin's dialectical relationship with the post-revolutionary situation: the political leader "will adapt himself progressively to *praxis* to the degree that *praxis* adapts itself to his prefabricated idiosyncracy; from compromise to compromise, equilibrium will realise itself finally by transformation of the man and a deviation of the enterprise." In carrying out any enterprise, men "become other men occupied in attaining other objectives by other means: and they do not even know it."

Sartre used to claim that he was glad to admit past mistakes and misdemeanours because they were all committed by someone else. His career was full of discontinuities. He said that the War divided his life into two halves, but in both halves there were turning-points of almost equal importance: when his mother remarried he felt that a paradisal period had ended; the attainment of what he called "the age of reason" was a painful break with the past; his life changed again when, after seven years as a schoolteacher, he was earning enough to live as a professional writer. After the War he used the word "conversion" for his swing towards Communism in 1952; his break with the Party in 1968 was no less crucial.

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Though he was aligning himself with the extreme left, he still considered himself to be a Marxist—until his final conversion of 1977.

INTERVIEWERS OFTEN questioned him about his unfinished work, but his answers reveal little. In 1959 he said: "When one is writing non-philosophical works while still ruminating on philosophy—as I have been most of the last ten years—every page, every line, suffers from hernia." During the last twelve years of his life he usually claimed to be unworried by the accumulation of unfinished books: other people could finish them. In the long 1974 interview with Simone de Beauvoir he says:

> "With me there has usually been a sort of panic or change which made me decide suddenly—unpleasant decision—to stop there and not finish the book I was working on. It's curious because I used to have a perfectly classical and peaceful idea of myself; I saw the books a bit like the books my grandfather produced, books for reading. . . . At about the age of ten, I thought all the books I'd write would have a beginning and an end, would be rigorously written and would contain everything there was to say."

Like the child, the adult Sartre went on believing that a book could contain all there was to say, and it was usually less painful to break off than to settle for less. His major projects were inordinately ambitious. The biography of Flaubert was designed to test whether it is possible to encompass all the available data about one man.

> "We have at the outset no assurance that such a summary is possible and that the truth is not multiple."

When he wrote this, Sartre saw Marxism as depending on the assumption that a single truth is within reach, that contradictions, conflicts, heterogeneities, anomalies can all be subsumed in one totalisation. If they can't, reality is incomprehensible. His ambition in the *Critique* was to test knowledge about history in the same way that the biography aims to test knowledge about the individual: is there a unity which dialectical materialism can reveal? Without postulating a divine, extraterrestrial viewpoint, can we impute a single meaning to history? It will be comprehensible only if its "diverse multiplicities" can be totalised—can be viewed as "connected and merged in their very oppositions and diversities by an intelligible totalisation from which there is no appeal." Enterprises on this scale, obviously, are incompatible with classical form.

Sartre also disliked endings and he was never particularly good at them, even in his short stories. In *La Nausée* the ending is the weakest part: the commitment to writing fiction seems to be forced on Roquentin from above, while it would have been disastrous if Sartre had ended *Les Chemins de la liberté* by sticking to his original intention. He wanted Mathieu, after returning to civilian life, to discover his freedom by raping and murdering a woman.

In exposition, as in narrative, Sartre is at his best when

Italo Calvino

MR PALOMAR

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Michael Wood, **London Review of Books**

"Since *Invisible Cities* (1972) Calvino has been recognizable as the most magically ingenious of contemporary Italian novelists; and readers discover that Mr Palomar's attempt at objective description is claimed and explored only to be playfully exposed."
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"Calvino, whose death we mourn, represents a highpoint of literary evolution; his skill is immense but retains a simian agility . . . Through the aptly named Palomar, myriad experiences, observations and riddles of perception are telescoped into a series of carefully structured vignettes. Each short section vibrates with tantalising possibilities that develop with musical accuracy . . . As ever, Calvino's gaze is crystal-clear; his writing has the easy beauty of clarity . . . *Mr Palomar* is a work of cunning dialectics that goes beyond the delight in paradoxes for which Calvino is lazily praised."
Geoff Dyer, **New Statesman**

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opening a subject up, developing, widening, arguing with himself, subverting or distending form rather than imposing it. His writing is most exciting when it appears to catch the rhythm of his thinking in letters, diaries, short critical essays and in the journal he makes Antoine Roquentin keep. Here, as in his best plays, he shows his skill at dramatising the play of consciousness, while the crucial episode of the novel, replaying Roquentin's nauseated reactions to the chestnut tree in the park, is partly a re-enactment of Sartre's nauseated reactions—originally described in a letter to Simone de Beauvoir—to a tree he saw in a square at Le Havre. He was already intending to use this tree as a symbol of contingency, but he wasn't sure what kind of tree it was and enclosed a sketch so that she could tell him.

The primal impulse behind both his fiction and his philosophy is nostalgia for the orderliness that is misssing from reality but present in films and stories, where each part has a meaning in relation to the whole. In *La Nausée* he makes a gentle effort to impose form on a story which climaxes in the discovery of formlessness, but *L'Age de raison, Le Sursis* and *La Mort dans l'âme* would not have been as good as they are if he had been trying to create three self-sufficient structures. After *Le Sursis* had been published Maurice Blanchot said that incompleteness was the greatest strength of Sartre's novel, which "now looks as though it has the advantage of eluding us for ever." In 1945 Sartre announced that the third and final volume would be called *La Dernière chance*. In 1949, when *La Mort dans l'âme* appeared as the third but not the final volume, he said that *La Dernière chance* would follow, but it never did. In his work for the theatre he contrived thoroughly effective endings for *Les Mains sales, Le Diable et le bon Dieu* and *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, but the play with the most powerful ending is *Huis clos*, in which the three characters finally realise that nothing can end. The last words spoken are: "*Eh bien, continuons.*"

SARTRE HAD two methods of writing. When he wanted to achieve a polished style, as in *Les Mots*, he would fill only the first three lines on each page of the exercise book, leaving space for painstaking revisions of each sentence. But his predominant feeling was that pains should not be taken, and with most of his philosophical writing he assumed that the book already existed inside his consciousness, that the task of writing was simply the task of extricating sentences from himself—copying them out as if someone were dictating to him. When he wrote the first part of the *Critique* he was galvanised by anger at current political events. In 1952 he had been prompted to write *Les Communistes et la paix* by the total failure of a strike the Communists had organised; in 1956 the Soviet intervention in Hungary had provoked *Le Fantôme de Staline*. Material from both books is recycled in the *Critique*, which gave him an outlet for his feelings about the atrocities being perpetrated by the French in Algeria. According to Simone de Beauvoir, he did not work

> "in his usual way, pausing, crossing words out, tearing up pages, starting them all over again; for hours at a stretch he rushed from one sheet of paper to the next without re-reading them, as if possessed by the words which his pen couldn't catch, even at this gallop. I'd hear him crunching corydrane tablets to maintain the impetus. By the end of the afternoon he was exhausted, his concentration shattered. His gestures were uncertain and he'd often say one word instead of another."

This helps to explain why the *Critique* is such a badly written book, verbose, turgid and disorganised. During the 1974 interview with her he blames the lack of "planning, composition and lucidity" on corydrane and orthedrine. He "abused drugs a great deal", he said, for twenty years, but never so much as when writing the *Critique*.

> "As soon as one passed a certain point, one began to be destroyed and the risk was a reality. One liked having blurred ideas which were vaguely interrogative and which then disintegrated. It also meant one could drop dead, but there was no knowing when. . . . I wasn't having one tablet, I was taking ten at a time."

This is almost like playing Russian roulette: at one stage he was half deaf, with no skin left on his tongue.

Aggression like this against the self cannot be irrelevant to the habit of leaving work in an unfinished state. Karl Marx, who spoke of "mocking the rights of my body", would sometimes write all night in a confused mixture of dedication to his task and impatience to have it out of the way. He felt surges of hatred towards both the books he wrote and the books he read: "I am a machine condemned to devour them and to throw them in a changed form on the dunghill of history." He was liable not only to repudiate earlier writings but to use such words as "shit" to describe work that was still in progress. In his book *Marx's Fate* Jerrold Seigel compares the aggression that "fueled self-induced illnesses" to the "repudiative and anal patterns Erik Erikson has diagnosed in Luther." Marx directed aggression against his body, against the bourgeoisie, against his professional activity, which partly coincided with his sense of identity, and against philosophy. Philosophy had the same relation to the study of actuality, he said, as onanism to the act of love.

"TODAY", Sartre declared in 1971, "the new style of intellectual must give everything to the people." In 1940 he admitted: "I don't like men—I mean the male of the species. . . . For me there is half of the human race which scarcely exists." Underlying these extremes of altruism and misanthropy was an unsteady flow of aggression against himself and against the idea of the self. In 1957, writing the preface to André Gorz's *Le Traître*, he praises the book for questioning whether "I did it" can accurately be said of any action, and he uses the phrase "accidental individual", which had originally appeared in *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, a book provoked by Max Stirner's glorification of self-interest in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. Engels suggested to Marx that instead of ignoring this book, they could turn it upside down and build on it. Sharing Engels's hatred of "atomic individualism", Marx agreed. If he was himself an accidental individual, he was one who had been shaped by a father

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who preached self-sacrifice and practised self-promotion.

In *La Fantôme de Staline* Sartre attacked individualism: what bourgeois man respects in himself and claims to respect in other people is the value of the individual personality, whereas Soviet man subordinates his identity to the group, avoiding the "vices of bourgeois personalisation." Writing on Tintoretto, Sartre comments on his ability to paint in the style of Titian or Veronese, and to train assistants and members of his family to collaborate, with the result that some of the pictures which bear his name are the work of "a strong collective personality." The biography of Flaubert describes him as being "constituted" by an "explosive mixture of naïve scientism and godless religion", while the *Critique* ignores relationships between individuals to concentrate on relationships between groups. As Sartre says in the introduction, "The individual disappears from historical categories."

IN CASTIGATING capitalists and colonialists, Sartre, as Raymond Aron has pointed out, is more vindictive than Marx, who blamed the system and not the person. The quality of the jargon-ridden prose in the *Critique* shows that Sartre was no longer capable of writing philosophy unadulterated by political polemic. In an alienated society, he argues, freedom is impossible but necessary. The impossibility must be negated. This is achieved only when individual *praxis* converts itself freely into common *praxis*. Oppression can be resisted effectively only by the group-infusion, and only in revolutionary activity which indissolubly unites freedom and violence, hope and terror. In the storming of the Bastille, everyone reacts in a new way, not as an individual, not as an Other, but as an individual incarnation of the "common person." If the group is to constitute itself by an effective *praxis*, it will "liquidate othernesses within it" and will "eliminate procrastinators and oppositionists." With the dialectician's relish for paradox, Sartre asserts that the structures of freedom and reciprocity take on their full meaning when they appear in the "practical material movement of terror." Pledging himself to the group, the individual is "freely consenting to the liquidation of [his] person as free constituent *praxis*." The traitor must be lynched. "I am a brother in violence to my neighbours. . . . Violence is the very power of this lateral reciprocity of love." This contradicts the earlier self who had maintained that no oath can be binding: a man is not free to cancel his future freedom.

Though Sartre was fairly consistent in his enthusiasm for boxing and his belief in revolutionary violence, the damage he did to himself with drugs was not matched by outbreaks of violence against other people. He was usually mild, polite, patient. Nor is violence the right word for what he did to Existentialism, to Flaubert, and to the novelist he could have become. After a brief initial period of rejecting the word Existentialism, he committed himself to it fully, only to settle accounts rather roughly with his former philosophical conscience in 1957 when he declared that Marxism was the only valid philosophy, that Existentialism was only an enclave within it, an ideology, a parasitical system. Finally, three

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years before he died, he announced that he was no longer a Marxist.

IN 1929, WHEN HE MET Simone de Beauvoir, he told her that he wanted to be a combination of Stendhal and Spinoza. He failed to emulate Stendhal and—finding him too sympathetic—failed to criticise him, turning in preference to Flaubert, whom he described as the opposite of himself. Unfinished though it is, *L'Idiot de la famille* must rank as the biggest biographical monument ever erected, and behind this extraordinary mixture of devotion and hatred was the inflamed fear of becoming Flaubert's 20th-century *alter ego*. Anyone who appreciates good writing must regret the development that carried Sartre from the brilliant prose he was writing in his thirties—tough, sharp, precise, rich, humorous, a superb instrument for dramatising the moment-to-moment play of consciousness—to the flabby, careless, jargon-ridden, garrulous prose he was turning out in his fifties. Anyone who does not use the word "imaginative" pejoratively must question the development that carried him from his wary psychological investigation of the image-forming process to his progressive rejection of *l'imaginaire*.

The man who loved nothing more than writing grew into a reluctant man of letters who abused literature while using stimulants to squeeze productivity out of himself during the day and sedatives to sleep at night. One of his stories, "*Erostrate*", is based on a dream told to him by a friend, but from the age of about thirty he had no power of recall over his own dreams. It may be regrettable that he lavished so many years of work on assassinating a dead novelist, but it was in character. It's more regrettable that it was characteristic of him to be intent on suffocating the imaginative writer he once was.

Truth, Campaigns & Freedom

Reflections on a Prospectus—By DAVID HOLBROOK

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE of a university department in the Humanities? This question was raised for me recently when I received a prospectus and booklist from the Faculty of English at Cambridge for a paper in Part II of the English Tripos on the Literary Representation of Women. Such prospectuses are issued from our English Faculty over the names of those who prepare them, to minimise contention. All the same, they have an official air.

The prospectus struck me at first reading as a campaign document: it was partial. It must be said that it really resembled a training leaflet for cadres in a political movement rather than a university syllabus, because the whole approach was based on something called "feminist theory"—that is, a branch of political argument concerned to promote a cause (whose justice and rightness is assumed and taken for granted) rather than to find out the truth about humanity. Its references to literary works were more or less unexceptional, though there seemed to be serious gaps.

What I am concerned with is its "philosophical anthropology"—its approach to truth. Does it invite a proper Socratic dialogue in the Humanities, over gender? If one looked at it in this way, it was clearly biased. For instance, it conveyed implicitly that there were certain foregone conclusions—that on the whole the male view of woman was doubtful, that Freud was wrong, and the psychoanalytical view of women was questionable: and, fundamentally, that the attitude to women in our society and civilisation left much to be desired, and must be criticised and overthrown, for woman to find her proper realisation and true equality. It assumes that anyone interested in the subject will wish to adopt a certain point of view, which concerns itself with a form of revolution in society. Whole areas of the reading, for example, are devoted to feminist books published in America.

I happen to share some aspects of these views, though I believe it is a more difficult problem than most female liberationist movements make it out to be, because of unconscious factors: because of phenomenological problems of the nature of consciousness. In the document itself there was nothing of the aggressive air of militant feminism. But it invites the acceptance of a radical position which makes certain inherent assumptions, as do some of the questions in the first examination paper: and these, it seems, are not open to examination.

I have myself devoted a great deal of study to the psychological problems, and from this expedition into the subjective disciplines I have developed a deep sense of concern—even shame—about how man has treated woman in the past (and still does): but I am even more aware of the depth and intractability of problems of gender. So I believe that on this subject attention must also be paid to what people with very different views have been saying, as in Catholic psychotherapy (Karl Stern); in Jungian and Christian psychology (Ann Ulanov); and in more traditional areas of psychological investigation of mother, child and gender (D. W. Winnicott, Robert Stoller, and John Bowlby). If I were teaching students to investigate problems of gender I would feel that in this area we have a problem which especially calls for openness of mind. Certainly, where undergraduates are concerned the first task is surely to give them a general historical-critical view of the development of psychoanalytical

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thought, rather than simply a critique of these insights from the point of view of radical feminism with its particular purposes.

OF COURSE, ONE WANTS the insights derived from university studies applied in society, and in this area we are concerned with increasing human freedom through insights. When (say) Mrs Q. D. Leavis studied the achievements of 19th-century women novelists, her interest was not merely that of a literary critic. She was excited by the emergence of a certain kind of female consciousness, of woman's mind, asserting its own special powers and claims, in a society in which there was too much suppression of woman, and discrimination against her, in law and other social arrangements. She did her work on Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, Mrs Oliphant, Mrs Humphry Ward, George Eliot and others, as part of an impulse to elevate the creative feminine consciousness to a higher level of recognition, and to draw from these achievements certain important values and concepts of freedom. She sought to champion woman's attempt to uphold her integrity, in a society which (still) seeks to vindicate certain traditional procedures of perverting it. And, evidently, she wanted to spread all these new attitudes abroad.

The same is true of the work of her husband, F. R. Leavis. He, too, may be seen as the champion of what existentialists call "authenticity": the effort individuals make to become what they feel they have it in them to become: to live from their own moral centre of being, whether they are men or women. For this reason he championed the literary representaiton of a "Pip" (in *Great Expectations*), a Huckleberry Finn, a Gwendolen Harleth, a Birkin. However, as I believe, Leavis tended (as over *Little Dorrit*) to prefer certain works in which (in my terms) woman is presented as needing to be submissive and *controllable*: and because of this, I believe, he failed to see certain problems which arose in Lawrence's position. But his views matter, again, because they were expected to be applied in living, and were concerned with the defence of "being" against influences that menaced self-realisation and freedom.

There is another important aspect of that *Scrutiny* position at best, which I value highly. It is expressed by Leavis's maxim (to which he did not always adhere), "This is so, is it not?" That is, he recognised his own work as a literary critic to be in the nature of a Socratic dialogue, taking place in that context. He was not as "open" as he thought: but he had the great mind's recognition of the importance of openness and exchange.

There are many implications in his use of that catch-phrase: and it is its spirit which is singularly missing from the campaign document issued as the prospectus for the Literary Representation of Women paper. The difference is that the prospectus gives off an air of *knowing before the work begins what the answers are or might be*: that is, it has the air of a piece of propaganda for an ideology from a position which has already been taken.

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THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE to be invoked is *quaerere verum*. The objection to the document in question is that it represents a polarisation. This polarisation inhibits the quest for truth in a way indicated by some rhetorical questions uttered in Professor Ann Ulanov's book, *Receiving Woman*:[1]

> "Must sexual polarity, always, inevitably, degenerate into violent polarization? . . . Do we not have in our time an opportunity for a different line of development, where sexual polarity confronts us with the possibility of widening and deepening consciousness to hold both modalities of being human in simultaneous awareness?"

That is, no approach to the problems of woman, in literature or society, certainly in a university context, should take such a militantly "pro-feminist" line—because truth is only to be gained by examining both modalities of being, male and female, in an open and simultaneous awareness.

The extremists, of course, seek to destroy the images of polarity by obliterating the central one of sexuality. Nothing less, the radicals believe, will enable us to do away with a corrupt social system and to remedy a sick society. "What begins as an anguished cry for inclusion of the specific presence of women", says Professor Ulanov, "ends in a global attack on all of society and rejects the very existence of widely disparate persons." This leads to a simple denial of biological and psychological realities.

In its leanings towards this approach, the "campaign" approach moves towards a falsification, towards new false stereotypes which are not better than the old ones. And this falsification is already manifest in the Faculty prospectus.

As Professor Ulanov says, the sexual polarity implicitly denied in extreme feminism is quite clearly a biological reality in psychoanalytical studies of being, identity, and gender. The special, separate, nature of woman (in her "disquality", to use Lawrence's word) has been brought out in them. The simplistic ideas in many radical texts about the origins and nature of femininity, how it is conditioned and formed by "society" and impressed upon us by cultural stereotypes, are now thought by many to be extremely dubious—not least in the light of the deeper and deeper investigations made into the subtle complexities of gender by psychoanalysis, as it has penetrated more and more deeply into the origins of being, in the interaction between mother and infant.

When we insist, on the basis of these insights, that there is something specifically to be called feminine—a mode of being, as a biological fact—this is not done with an impulse to return to an ostrich position. On the contrary, we need to encounter sexual differences which have gone unacknowledged because of the same unconscious fears which have provoked so much injustice in the past, not least because of the unconscious dread inevitably occurring over problems of dependence, and over the legacy of the infant's recognition that she who gave life could (as a witch) take it away.

The recognition of woman as she truly is requires not the denial of her special qualities (which denial is but another defence against the truth) but a recognition of the problems of darkness and mystery associated with woman. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the soul, as Professor Ulanov has pointed out, has always been represented as female:

> "Its mysteries, its flights, its patient flowering, its insistent bids for attention have again and again been likened to woman's nature."

Woman is seen as the mediator to another world: the divine intercessor, either as Sophia, the personification of wisdom, or the compassionate Mother of God. In the Cambridge reading list, such considerations are implicitly dismissed, in the perspectives of radical feminism, as a mystification masking social procedures which suppress and exploit women. But there are other ways of looking at femininity, not by "unmasking" but by examining the biological nature of human beings and their consciousness.

THERE ARE MANY SOURCES of depth psychology which support and extend such ideas, and which delineate—as an aspect of the human truth—the especial nature of woman, as an aspect of sexual polarity. Professor Ulanov summarises the findings in these studies thus:

> "Jung asserts that the whole person is contrasexual—a man consciously related to the feminine aspects of himself, a woman consciously in touch with her masculine side. [Harry] Guntrip discusses male doing and female being, as modes of human reality existing in each sex. [Donald M.] Winnicott writes of the pure female element that precedes doing and the pure male element as the doing that spontaneously flows from being. Both elements belong to each sex. [David] Bakan writes of the same polarity as a set of tendencies toward communion and toward agency. These terms appeal to [N.] Chodorow, who traces the cultural influences of child-rearing that help shape these identifications. Both Bakan and Chodorow argue for the inclusion of both tendencies in each sex. Jean Baker Miller describes affiliative and competitive styles of apprehending reality, styles that each sex develops. Melanie Klein traces the similarities and differences in the formation of girls' and boys' identities, a perception of differences that facilitates perception of traits held in common. Each child must come to terms with matriarchal and patriarchal ego-identification and super-ego components."

And this is but one small corner of a vast body of philosophical anthropology almost totally excluded from the Cambridge prospectus.

The issue, as Professor Ulanov goes on to argue, now requires "re-locating." It has become politicised and seriously falsified, involving new forms of denial of the problem, and new limiting stereotypes.

> "Rather than falling into hostile images of sexual polarization or returning to earlier versions of a presexual androgyny, now we see persons as they actually are, in all their differences . . . we can avoid the coupling force of disjunctive sexual roles and the dismal power struggles

[1] Ann Belford Ulanov, *Receiving Woman* (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981).

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between the sexes, for we recognise now that both sexual modalities belong to both sexes. . . ."

When Professor Ulanov says "we see", she is being over-optimistic. It is, rather, that we *could* see it like this, if we were not misled by partial approaches like the feminist-radical one so powerfully influential in the Cambridge document.

Insistence on the need to stick to the truth involves an important philosophical decision. There are profound implications behind a belief in Socratic dialogue. Its rejection marks a belief in short cuts: intolerant of academic discourse, the radicals believe we must get on with changing the world, leaving the subtleties to be dealt with later. In the present time, woman is clearly still suffering from injustice: society imposes something called "the sexual fix" (Stephen Heath's book of that title is recommended at least twice in the prospectus), and so we should break the bonds and bring about the revolution first. But supposing the theoretical basis of the revolution is all wrong (remember Lysenko)?

Adherence to Socratic dialogue rests upon a faith that people by their very nature possess the power of grasping ultimate and absolute truths. This is a long and uninterrupted intellectual tradition. This question is discussed in a most relevant and interesting way in Edmund Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences.*[2] He sees the whole history of philosophy as a struggle for true and genuine meaning "and thus for the meaning of a genuine humanity." It is a struggle to "bring latent reason to the understanding of its own possibilities and thus to bring to insight the possibility of metaphysics as a true possibility." Metaphysics is more or less "out" in the present atmosphere of analytical philosophy: but, Husserl insists, we belong to a wave or surge of thought, which began in Ancient Greece, in which man has been seeking the truth and meaning of his life:

> "a humanity which seeks to exist, and is only possible, through philosophical reason, moving endlessly from latent to manifest reason and forever seeking its own norms through this, its truth and genuine human nature."

Our problem is that we do not know whether this *telos* which was inborn in European humanity at the birth of Greek philosophy is "merely a factual, historical delusion" or whether "Greek humanity was not rather the first breakthrough to what is essential to humanity as such, its *entelechy*." It has yet to be shown that the path the Greeks took will lead us to our fulfilment.

We can't give it up now: we are still trying. Our efforts, however, to find the truth and meaning of human existence are based on a huge assumption: that, ultimately, we shall find out the truth about ourselves and the world, and so begin to answer the questions of what we are able to believe.

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[2] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Northwestern University Press, 1970).

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The impulse or *telos* of this movement is thus both a massive idealisation, and at the same time profoundly humble. There is in its ethos both an aspiring belief that man can reach the truth, and a fear that perhaps we never shall. Perhaps all we can ever say is: "For us, there is only the trying. . . ."

THIS DICHOTOMY is there in Plato's *Meno*. As Marjorie Grene reports (in *The Knower and the Known*, 1966), in the 1960s Karl Popper and Michael Polanyi gave sharply contrasting interpretations of the *Meno*: but both found it important as a starting-point for their appraisals of the history of thought.

Does the *Meno* record Plato's confidence that men by their very nature possess the power of grasping ultimate and absolute truths? Or his despair of their ability to acquire, whether by reasoning or experience, any knowledge not implanted in their minds before birth?

According to Popper, the *Meno* marks the beginning of the dangerous doctrine that "truth is manifest" which lies behind so much mistaken philosophy and pseudo-science. Man is in possession of absolute knowledge, and Socratic dialogue merely awakens him to what he knows. But what Polanyi saw in Plato was his pondering of the mysterious nature of discovery:

> "How can we ask for something if we do not so much as know what that something is?"

This puzzlement stands at the beginning of a long and valuable period of enquiry into the nature of knowing, which has never been solved, and which should keep us always in awe. To Polanyi, far from exhibiting Plato's optimism, the *Meno* opens up a perplexing contradiction at the root of our intellectual situation: how can we know the unknown, and describe as our goal what is, as yet, undescribable? Plato never resolves this, since the account of knowing explored in the *Meno* is not really reconcilable with his belief that everything is already known in us, only waiting to be drawn forth.

How can we recognise a problem? How can we advance into the unknown? Polanyi tries to produce an answer in his *Personal Knowledge*, and there he quotes Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception*:

> "We must define thought in terms of that strange power which it possesses of being ahead of itself, of launching itself and being at home everywhere. . . ."

Plato makes Meno ask the fundamental question, at the very start of enquiry into the nature of knowledge itself: "On what lines will you look, Socrates, for a thing of whose nature you know nothing at all?" What things will you select for your attention among all the others? And when you hit upon it, *how will you know it is the thing you did not know*?

What we do know is that we know. Polanyi develops the theory that our knowing is a strange process of integrating many tacit clues, which we hold in subsidiary awareness: only by living through the search for a solution do we eventually bring the *Gestalt* to a focal awareness. To do this, we have to "live" the problem. As Marjorie Grene says:

> "To put it in existentialist language, they (the clues) are aspects of our transcendence. So we live in the tension between what we are and what we seek: between the world whose facticity we share and ourselves whose shaping makes the world a world. Our explicit awareness, the focal core of consciousness, is always founded in and carried by the tacit acceptance of something not explicit, which binds, heavily and concretely, ourselves to and within our world. This means . . . that knowledge is always personal."

This is why we must believe in the open pursuit of the truth.

Of course, bodies of truth are established "out there" (to use Leavis's phrase) "in the criss-cross of utterance between us." But knowledge is always personal, in the sense of being found by the creative dynamics of a person passionately pursuing the truth. It is, however, always contingent, in the spirit of "This is so, is it not?" Values, meanings, and even facts, are established by a process of naturalistic descriptions, "right to A, right to B", and so on.

SOCRATIC DIALOGUE, thus, is essential. It sharpens the edge of the personal quest by challenge: it helps to define objectives: and it makes clear the gains, once a recognition of a new truth has been attained this is the purpose of scientific papers and discourse. But the truth is offered first from the creative personal commitment, and remains (as Socratic dialogue implies) *contingent*. As T. H. Huxley long ago reminded scientists:

> "There is not a single belief that is not a bounden duty with them to hold with a light hand and to part with cheerfully, the moment it is really proved to be contrary to any fact, great or small."

Whether a better theory is offered is irrelevant.

Plato believed (explicitly) that we are given inner truth, and it has to be drawn from us: yet he admitted implicitly in the *Meno* a perplexity which does not accord with this. Karl Popper believed that there can be no verification, only logical proofs of error and falsification. According to Marjorie Grene, both were wrong, because their starting-point was that knowledge must be explicit. Polanyi has shown this is not so. The falsification of hypotheses is certainly logically sound, whereas verification is not. But there *is* learning and there *are* discoveries—and that this is so is a mystery as yet unexplained by philosophy. Polanyi has come nearest to explaining how much discoveries come about by the integration of subsidiary and tacit clues. Marjorie Grene puts it thus:

> "We are always, as human beings, beings in a world, in advance of our data in the aspiration to knowledge, yet caught in the ambiguity of our finitude between the explicit surface of our knowledge, the formulable, impersonal aspect of it, and the tacit, often even unknown clues to it in reliance on which we attend to that explicit core. There is no absolute, once for all, knowing by human

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beings, neither in supernatural confrontation with Really Reals [Plato] nor in a logical checking of falsified not-knowns [Popper]. There are only ourselves, using all the means at our disposal; bodily orientation, sensory images, verbal formulations with their over- and undertones, social taboos and imperatives—including all the lore of practice and procedure of any given discipline we have been trained to—and, finally, our deepest, widest vision of the world we dwell in: using all these as clues to the nature we are in a given instance trying to understand. In this sense understanding, knowing, *is* learning to understand: always susceptible to error, but also, though never wholly and though never *known* to be so, capable of success."

In this, derived from Polanyi, we have the delineation of the quest for understanding which in each person is much deeper than the explicit, and deeper than intellect: and it also points to a community of individuals sharing the pursuit of truth between them. Much of what is said here could apply to literary criticism, and it accords very well with Leavis's account of literary studies. Though he never recognised it as such, his position had much in common with existentialism and with Husserl's phenomenology.

This, I suggest, implies a very different view of the search for understanding from that implied in the prospectus on the Literary Representation of Women issued by the Cambridge English Faculty. There are clearly differences in the modern world between those who believe that, while he may have no source of absolute truth within him, man can justifiably hope to establish truth and gain understanding; those who despair of his ever advancing in understanding (a view expressed in many fashionable nihilistic works); and those campaigners for whom truth has already been established, like the radical feminists. The common pursuit for the last group is not the furtherance of understanding by Socratic dialogue, but the application of established truths of a certain kind to solve social problems: the danger is a new dogmatism.

True freedom, on the contrary, lies in our submission to those processes of investigation and discovery which emerge by our reliance on subsidiary and tacit powers, leaving the future open to what we discover. In this, we are still trying to assert that the impulse to find and realise a certain kind of humanity, which began in Ancient Greece, was a true leap forward for mankind.

The amelioration of woman's position depends upon these latter dynamics, for old prejudices and modes cannot be overcome until assent is given to new and truly radical truths. The enormous advances we have made over the last hundred years in our understanding of children and their needs, now embodied in their education at all levels, especially in the primary school, are an instance of this. These gains were won over a long period, through Socratic dialogue.

In an English Faculty, in the Humanities Departments of a university, the study of literature ought to contribute to such advances in understanding. Here it is important to ask about problems of authenticity and integrity in sexual

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relationships as in *Pamela*, *Roxana*, *North and South*, and *Women in Love*. The image of woman needs to be examined, from Chaucer's Criseyde to Lady Macbeth, Miranda, Cleopatra and Mariana, to George MacDonald's Lilith and James Joyce's Molly Bloom. But in all critical judgments (as, for instance, in trying to estimate the limitations of man's view of woman) a sound and rich grasp of philosophical anthropology is necessary, embracing the various disciplines which have investigated man's (and woman's) subjective life. One of Husserl's criticisms of what has happened in European thought in our era is that we have pursued the investigation of the "objective" world at the expense of the "subjective." The Greeks set out to understand both. Fortunately, in our time the "subjective" disciplines have returned to correct the balance—as in psychoanalysis, existentialism, existential psychology, phenomenology, *Daseins*-analysis, philosophical biology, and post-critical and post-Kantian philosophy. As Professor Ulanov has argued, these have yielded important insights into the mysterious special nature of woman, and of femininity in both men and women.

Does the Cambridge reading list offer students even a toe-hold introduction to this vast field of study, which is crucial to the study of the perplexities of gender? It does not. It offers a highly selective picking of texts directed towards action rather than understanding—without enough of the perplexing and disturbing engagement with problems of femininity and gender which have been advanced since Freud. It even tends to warn students off psychoanalysis, by introducing critiques of Freud to students who have no knowledge of developments in psychotherapy. In offering such a selective, biased, and politicised approach, it is not even genuinely radical. Kate Millett, for instance, proposes new polarised stereotypes, excluding from woman certain aspects of her nature as if that would solve the problem. To take by contrast but one figure from subjective disciplines, D. W. Winnicott's insights into the nature of femininity and the creative powers of woman (and our fear of these) are profoundly revolutionary. Yet, characteristically, the "radical" femininist movement ignores these, or prefers Lacan (whose abstruse theories seem to yield so few insights).

Other areas of study I could not find reference to in the Cambridge syllabus are the work of Melanie Klein; of Robert Stoller on gender; F. J. J. Buytendijk, a philosophical biologist who has written on woman; Catholic opinion, such as Karl Stern's *The Flight from Woman*, and many studies of Mariology and feminist theology.

Interdisciplinary studies are notoriously difficult, and require time and effort to develop. One might in a post-graduate course develop some bridges between literature and psychology. The third year of the Cambridge English Tripos is exceptionally one in which the student feels pressed for time, amid powerful demands. Yet it is possible too for students to dip a toe into (say) existentialist philosophy, or Nietzsche, or St Paul.

But if they are to be introduced to such a subject as the Literary Representation of Women—an excellent and engaging subject—it should not be by way of a campaign programme. The philosophical anthropology introduced to a student at that stage should be truly "open", involving as many varieties of interpretation and understanding as possible—which is complex and daunting. For we are not only "teaching" students a "subject": we also are giving them the experience and a model of *how to think*.

Those to whom the humanities matter should study the prospectus in detail. It is described as "a paper with a feminist impetus." This seems to me wrong from the start: for the syllabus to be presented as a form of "positive discrimination." If a university Humanities department is concerned to seek the truth, to pursue ultimate freedom, it should not attach such a paper to a single cause. A university should never be *partial* in this respect. Of course, all forms of open and critical study ought to "make a difference" to "our subsequent reading of literature" and "our social and political understanding" of ourselves. But in the end this difference will only be truly radical if it is the product of attention to the many facets of truth, not merely those areas of opinion which serve one particular cause and narrow interpretations of that cause.

To claim that this paper represents something "more than an academic exercise" seems to offer a justification for a certain biased attention to the subject in hand, in favour of political persuasion and action. In its implications it is anti-intellectual, since it suggests that the "mere" pursuit of truth is futile and ineffective.

The following sentence (p. 2) seems a dangerous one:

> "There is a powerful sense that traditional criticism is not available as a tool for feminist analysis of text, since it assumes absence of difficulty or difference when dealing with female figures."

This is dangerous because it is again based on polarisation, and on *hostility*. It resembles too much the kind of rejection of "bourgeois values" that we find in (say) Simone de Bauvoir. Traditional literary criticism is available, and even if it is predominantly male-written, we must allow that it contains a great deal that is written by the "female" component of man. Though I believe his attitude to women was wrong, D. H. Lawrence, for example, displays an uncanny capacity at times to imagine what is going on inside a woman: so do Tolstoy and Shakespeare, despite their problems.

The students who read only the books set by the Cambridge syllabus will be drawn by feminist tracts into a particular point of view, at a time when they are quite unable to judge for themselves the issues in psychoanalysis, or even to grasp the issues involved about man and mind, as between, say, the Freudian "model" and the existentialist "model", or "objective" and "subjective" disciplines of thought. They will find themselves involved in questions of penis envy, or projection, or the Oedipus or Electra complexes, without realising that in, say, the work of Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, W. R. D. Fairbairn, Peter Lomas and R. D. Laing quite different theories about identity, sexuality and gender have emerged.

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WHY, TOO, WERE Mrs Q. D. Leavis's studies of women writers in the 19th century not mentioned here? Why was there no reference to the deeper problems of the special contribution women writers have made to the question of integrity, and the need to employ the rigours of introspection, to achieve inner order and thus produce a woman of great inward authority, as in the novels of Mrs Gaskell? The feminist approach implicitly devalues and depreciates the immense contribution women have made, to the recognition of existential needs, to the quest for integrity in the face of man's unconscious envy and unfairness, and the limitations of "society."

There is a failure to pay proper tribute to the great tradition—of Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot (what would she have thought of this "feminist" paper?), Elizabeth Gaskell, Edith Wharton, Emily Dickinson. The tone ("attempts at self-representation of women whose lives fit the 'model' only with difficulty") may even be seen as something of an insult to woman's achievements.

And, significantly, the fundamental contribution to human life and culture made by the mother is *totally* absent from this whole prospectus—as it is, indeed, from much "feminist" propaganda and criticism. Yet the problem of dependence on the mother and the processes of gender identification with the mother lie at the root of the problem of the "*Phantom Woman*" in the unconscious, which according to Winnicott is the origin of man's unfairness to woman. It is also the area from which many problems of sexuality and relationship derive. The problem has profound complexities, which require depth psychology to understand. And it can only be understood by taking account of the earlier and most primary influences, including the infant's response to the mother, with consequences for later fantasy life.

There is, admittedly, much that is illuminating in the prospectus about the problems of the presentation of woman in medieval literature, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and the 18th century—where, as in Richardson and Defoe, the problem is gross. But I am puzzled by the omission, at the heart, of the greatest works by women: why, for instance, are students not to be involved in *Emma*, and *Mansfield Park*? And why are *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Wives and Daughters*, *The Custom of the Country* and *The Ordeal of Richard Mahoney* not at the centre of the thinking about Literature and Femininity? I am also puzzled by the complete absence of any reference to Sylvia Plath.

THROUGHOUT THE SYLLABUS and the examination paper a heavy emphasis is placed on women's non-achievement and non-fulfilment, as if to exaggerate the oppressiveness of male domination: it even comes to seem that woman's very consciousness has been defined for her by man. The potentialities of woman become diverted into hostility and subversion, so that woman seems in danger of becoming enslaved in yet another false paradigm.

So a false idea of freedom takes the place of the true

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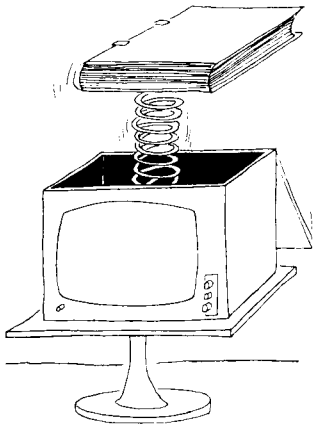
experience of freedom, which springs from a genuine pursuit of truth. Instead of the mysterious gleam of new insight, we are confronted with a phantom of obsession with being "imprisoned" by "society" so that, unless there is some massive demolition, freedom can never be achieved. It is because of its failure to find the true clue to freedom that this project seems dead.

That deadness should surely be resisted in an English Faculty, which deals, after all, with a creative subject—with the creative consciousness itself.

Impolite Letters

The Teaching of English—By HUGH DAVID



TEACHERS FEEL about the authors of textbooks the way drama critics feel about actors and directors. They rather resent the amount of money that is made—in the former case by writing never-wholly-satisfactory books which the teachers know in their hearts they could have done very much better, if only they had had the time. All the same, teachers have come to accept the authors' existence (as drama critics have the theatricals'), realising that life in the classroom would be harder without them.

Still, the suspicion remains that authors are in it for the money: that, seeing a gap in the market, they have rushed to plug it with a book (more likely a whole series of books) cobbled together from old lesson plans; that they are more interested in lining their pockets than in advancing the art or science of pedagogy and stimulating genuine innovation in the curriculum.

There is a certain amount of truth in this. Despite the adjectives which sprinkle the blurbs—"major", "new", "innovative", "pioneering"—a high percentage of new textbooks are hack works, hardly distinguishable from their predecessors. In many cases teachers could indeed have done much better (if only they had had the time). And despite—or, curiously, because of—the recession, an established textbook author does make a very good living. Even in the educational publishing industry's darkest days, two or three years ago, when firms were going to the wall, merging or at the very least slashing their lists and refusing to commission, *their* books were the ones in print. Reps took them into school staffrooms; they were selling, and selling not just singly but in battalions. Sets of 25 or 30 remained the normal order.

Indeed, their books were the only ones in print. "Shortage of cash is leading to an ossification of the curriculum", Jean-Luc Barbanneau, then Educational Publishing Director of Harrap Ltd, admitted to me in 1983. "You can do as much as you like in the Schools' Council, have wonderful teachers and specialists churning out textbook after textbook, but if the schools can't buy them it all goes for nothing." He cited as an example two French courses published by Harrap. One, innovative and very favourably reviewed, had been published in 1979. It was selling—but the older, more conservative course it was designed to replace was still selling "literally twenty times as many copies." Financial pressures often left schools unwilling or unable to look at new approaches, and publishers had little option but to stick by their traditional authors.

Occasionally, however, no matter how dark the publishers' prospects (off the record, they now admit that the market is picking up) or how slim their profit margins, publishing houses are still prepared to take a gamble on a book their blurbs can truly describe as "a wholly new/innovative/pioneering concept in English/French/geography teaching." One such arrived almost as Barbanneau was speaking, apparently just another A-level English Literature textbook jammed into a padded envelope and sent out for review. But *Varieties of Writing*[1] was not just another textbook. For once, the blurb was accurate. It was, or at least it was proposing, a wholly new concept in English teaching. In their Introduction, John Brown and David Jackson—the book's editors—said as much:

> "It is put forward as the first stage of a challenge to the established canon in English Literature courses (where the first-division league tables of prescribed texts—Chaucer, Hardy, Dickens, Austen, Milton, Pope, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot—have a cyclical predictability) and to the view of literature as a received and predetermined, mono-ethnic National Cultural Heritage with a limited number of classic texts."

IN OTHER WORDS, *Varieties of Writing* was saying that there is something very wrong with the way in which English Literature, and particularly Advanced Level English Literature, is taught in our schools. Rather than an annual tinkering with the syllabus—removing Eliot, substituting Brontë, changing the set Shakespeare—it suggested that the time had perhaps come to demolish the whole crumbling edifice and start again.

[1] *Varieties of Writing*. Edited by JOHN BROWN and DAVID JACKSON. Macmillan Education, £3.50.

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So what is wrong with the way in which our secondary schools are teaching the first two of the Three Rs? According to Her Majesty's Inspectors, much of the problem lies in the woolliness which has seemingly resulted from the "pupil-centred" teaching of the 1960s and early 1970s. They believe that there is no clear agreement about what should be taught and when—a situation they have attempted to remedy in *English from 5-16*,[2] a curriculum discussion paper issued in the autumn of 1984 by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Welcomed by the Education Secretary, Sir Kieth Joseph, as a step towards the establishment of national curriculum objectives in English, it suggested among other things that seven-year-olds should be able to use full stops and capital letters reliably; that eleven-year-olds should have a grasp of spelling rules and paragraphing, understand the terms "subject" and "object", and recognise the differences between tenses. Sixteen-year-olds, it recommended, should know all the main parts of speech and be able to distinguish between sentences, clauses, and phrases.

Such feats are frankly far beyond most pupils in our state schools today; and the report, with its prescriptive tone and heavy emphasis on the teaching of grammar, has already received a warm welcome from parents and those other interested parties outside the classroom who, since the days of the Black Papers, have been pointing to "falling standards."

Alone among all the professions, education is a field in which everyone is his own expert; and the neo-Black-Paperites' protestations about (and crude, over-simplified or sometimes plain daft solutions to) "the problem" of falling standards pepper the correspondence columns of our daily and Sunday newspapers. That no one has as yet reliably defined or quantified the problem matters not at all. The complaints bubble up year after year, usually in mid-summer, just after the public examination papers have been marked. Last year was no exception. An anonymous examiner of A-level English Literature started the ball rolling with a piece in *The Times Educational Supplement* (24 August 1984) bemoaning the lack of basic literacy among the candidates whose papers he had marked. "The confusion of 'its' and 'it's', 'there' and 'their' is ubiquitous", he reported, and he went on to catalogue other grammatical howlers and simple misspellings.

The story was picked up by *The Sunday Times* (26 August), which ran it under the headline "Oh woe! What has happened to good English at school?" Correspondence kept the polemic alive well into September, largely because of the comments of Mr Bill Mittins, of the National Association for the Teaching of English, with which the report had ended. "Antiquated" concern over spelling and grammar was still very common, he admitted. But, rashly, he went on:

> "I think English teachers are concerned with more important things than basic spelling and grammar. The meaning of words and how to explore them is what is really important. Misspelling is regrettable, but if the meaning is communicated that is the main thing."

The Sunday Times's readers did not think so, and were predictably appalled. Sympathising with the examiner, they castigated Mr Mittins's "pompous idiocy" and admitted to being "a mite square about standards of spelling". . . .

It may be amusing to watch such skirmishes from the sidelines, but they are only distractions. "More important things" are being discussed by English Literature teachers, as Mr Mittins's complacent-sounding comments and the timely appearance of *Varieties of Writing* suggest. Serious though it is, pupils' inability to determine when *its* takes an apostrophe has had to take a back seat; for what is being debated—on a decidedly ethical and philosophical level—is nothing less than the whole content of school English Literature syllabuses and the methods by which they are arrived at and taught.

The area is complex, and generalisations are inevitable; the background, however, can be quickly sketched. Historically, at Advanced Level these syllabuses have been modelled on those devised by universities. Candidates are expected to study a range of set books chosen from a prescribed list of well-known texts by classic writers—from what Brown and Jackson call the "established literary terrain."

Here, already, problems arise. For one reason and another, many of the very greatest writers in the English Literary tradition now cause grave problems for the teacher and for those responsible for drawing up examination

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[2] *English from 5-16. Curriculum Matters No. 1.* H.M.S.O., £1.50.

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syllabuses. To take one classic example: Milton, whom Tennyson called the "God-gifted organ-voice of England", is seldom taught in English secondary schools today—not because his language raises any particular difficulties, but because teachers can no longer assume that even nominally Christian students will recognise or understand the teeming Biblical allusions in *Paradise Lost*. Unlikely as it may seem, even reference to Adam, Satan, and Beelzebub can draw looks of blank incomprehension from otherwise able sixth-form students. The "mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies" has fallen victim to our pupils' ignorance; on many of the courses on which his writing so much as figures, it is considered adequately represented by *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso, Comus, Areopagitica*, or one of the "easier" prose works.

Nor is Milton alone in his enforced retreat from the classroom. Despite the undoubted adolescent appeal of *The Miller's Tale* and some books of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer too now features far less on A-level syllabuses than he did even a decade ago. "Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote . . . "—this time it is the words which are at fault. It is assumed that the linguistic demands are too high, that they will come between the student and the story—even though (at sixth-form level at least) a useful reading knowledge of Chaucer can be acquired within a couple of afternoons and without so much as opening one of the primers of Middle English grammar. (The tricky bits of *The Canterbury Tales* can, after all, always be construed by reference to the late Nevill Coghill's weak but useful "modernised" version.)

At higher levels too, Middle and, even more, Old English texts are now less often read than referred to. Langland is seldom thought worth tackling. In many university departments the study of Old English, once the bane of every first-year English Literature student but nevertheless diligently learnt, has become an "option." *Beowulf*, *The Ancrene Riwle*, and even *Sir Gawain* have been displaced in the over-crowded syllabuses by American Studies, Samuel Beckett, Stoppard and other soft options.

IRONICALLY, SHAKESPEARE STILL SURVIVES, even at the lowest levels. In A-level courses he reigns supreme, and virtually all O-level English Literature syllabuses (and even some of the centrally-set Mode 1 CSEs) demand a study of one or other of the "easier" plays, usually *Macbeth* or *The Merchant of Venice*. He is the most frequently set of all "set authors", and invariably read in the original. Teachers are the first to admit that they have helped to kill interest in literature by deadly line-by-line explanations of whole scenes; but they are understandably suspicious of the "simplified", plain-text, and modern English versions of Shakespeare which have appeared on the market over the past couple of years.

In a survey of the currently available editions (*The Times Educational Supplement*, 28 September 1984), Ralph Berry found it difficult to be polite at all about A. L. Rowse's modernised text of *Hamlet*[3]:

> "The editor has consistently changed 'thou' to 'you', corrected grammatical lapses, and introduced some modern words for archaic ('burdens' for 'fardels'). There are no notes, so that many unfamiliar terms ('ranker rate') go unexplained. The text is de-natured, and on occasion hopelessly marred. 'O God, Horatio, what a wounded name', comes out as 'wonderful name'. The call for a fully modernised Shakespeare is periodically raised, and with reason, but Rowse's is not the answer."

Yet, whatever the feelings of the educational establishment, such editions will inevitably be seized upon by students and brought illicitly into lessons, stuffed into back pockets, as Cole's and Brodie's notes have been for years. "If we can't read Shakespeare properly, there's no point in reading him at all", teachers may sigh. Are they right to be so resigned?

THE ABANDONMENT, not only of Shakespeare but of every other Great Writer is now being seriously discussed. Examination boards are known to be concerned at reports that employers set little store by knowledge of Chaucer, Milton, or Shakespeare. Auden, Orwell, and several other post-War novelists and playwrights are already represented on some A-level English Literature syllabuses—and the London Examining Board has recently announced that it has plans for a wholly new "alternative."

Rather than a lone voice crying in the wilderness, therefore, *Varieties of Writing* is the fullest attempt yet to devise such an alternative syllabus. Even in outwardly more orthodox textbooks there is a feeling that the responses demanded by the traditional A-level examination—and particularly in the Practical Criticism paper, with its "compare and contrast . . .", "write a critical appreciation of . . ." type of questions—are not enough.

Perhaps for no other reason than to make their books stand out in an already overcrowded field, several textbook authors are already including original ideas and approaches. In *Advanced Work in English* (second edition 1982)[4] C. R. E.

[3] *Hamlet*. Edited by A. L. ROWSE. University Press of America, £2.95.

[4] *Advanced Work in English*. By C. R. E. PARKER. Longman, £2.75.

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Parker deals with comprehension, criticism and appreciation, but also introduces a lengthy section on logic. It sketches the theories of both Aristotelian and modern symbolic logic in an attempt to "help the student to distinguish between good and bad argument"—an area which Parker touches on again in a comparably innovative section on statistics.

Don Shiach's *The Critical Eye*[5] is another example. Although "primarily intended to help students prepare for the practical criticism paper at A-level", and at first glance thorough, traditional, and even old-fashioned in its approach, it deals with a range of genres and authors far wider than is normally encountered in the traditional literary terrain. These include Department of Health and Social Security leaflets, newspaper articles, and samples of many different types of modern fiction. Extracts from the works of Dickens, Jane Austen, Scott Fitzgerald, Keats, Wordsworth, and Browning also appear, but are often presented in direct comparison with passages by Norman Mailer, Keith Waterhouse, Denise Levertov, and Cole Porter—fine writers all, but hardly in the first division of the old-style A-level examiner.

Perhaps most interesting among this selection of recent works is David Self's volume, *Creative and Critical*.[6] He goes further than Parker or Shiach—the book includes pictures of sports cars (to introduce the concept of individual response) and extracts from *Winnie-the-Pooh*, which are treated every bit as seriously as the more orthodox passages. He also acknowledges the importance of the student trying things for himself. Thus, in the first half of the book, which concentrates on the creative rather than the critical, the exercises are original in every sense of the word: "(*a*) Select your best original work. Type out fair copies. (*b*) Research the best places, magazines, etc., to which to submit them. (*c*) Submit them."

THESE APPROACHES SEEM RADICAL, and may appear to be "selling the pass." In the wider context of contemporary English teaching practice, however, they are less radical than they look. In the first three years of secondary school, pupils become used to the idea that English is a two-way medium; they are encouraged to make use of it to communicate, in poetry as well as prose, their own thoughts, opinions, and views of the world. "Creative writing"—particularly since the publication in 1975 of the so-called "Bullock Report", *A Language for Life*[7]—has come to be regarded as a crucial element in any main-school English syllabus. This, indeed, was what Mr Mittins meant in his comments to *The Sunday Times*: "The meaning of words and how to explore them is what is really important."

In this context, his comments on "antiquated" concern over spelling, and the much greater importance of communicating clearly, may be less complacent and are certainly less woolly than they initially appear. Nor are they the views of a lone eccentric. At meetings of the National Association for the Teaching of English, and in school staffrooms, many English teachers deplore the constrictions of the examination syllabus on what instinct, experience, and "leading educationists" tell them is good practice. "Creative writing" is both enjoyable and essential at all levels in the secondary school.

Unsurprisingly, the blurb on the back of *Varieties of Writing* also encapsulates this view. The book, it tells us, "offers not only a wider selection of sources from a greater spread of backgrounds; it also suggests more imaginative ways of working with the texts, *to help students become more effective and motivated language users*" (my italics).

Does the type of course which Brown and Jackson are proposing offer a possible solution to the shortcomings of current English teaching practice? By taking students away from the dry "set-book approach", it restores English as a creative medium. By viewing students as language producers as well as consumers, it may help to make them more expert in the use of language—and less likely to misspell it or misplace its apostrophes. This sounds like the best of all possible worlds.

WHAT WOULD BE an "alternative" A-level course as envisaged by Brown and Jackson, and even the London Examining Board? In the first place, it would be freed from the weight of university courses. In their Introduction to *Varieties of Writing*, Brown and Jackson note that only 4% of students taking A-level English Literature at 18 will go on to read English at university. Since sixth forms were never actually intended to be only university kindergartens, their book and most of the other courses currently under consideration are aimed at "the other 96%", and can therefore be much freer, drawing on a far wider range of sources than university "set books."

Varieties of Writing is divided into four main sections and, although the editors claim that "the better-known ones . . . are still very fully represented", hardly a single author in their anthology of travel writing, autobiography, documentary writing, and journalism can be said to belong to the First Division. In the section devoted to "Journalism" there are pieces by Alan Coren and Keith Waterhouse, among others, and even a photo-reproduction of the *Daily Mirror*'s

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[5] *The Critical Eye*. By DON SHIACH. Nelson, £3.75.
[6] *Creative and Critical*. By DAVID SELF. Nelson/Harrap, £3.25.
[7] *A Language for Life*. By ALAN BULLOCK. H.M.S.O., £9.50.

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castigation of *The Sun* as "The Harlot of Fleet Street", published at the height of the Falklands War. Included under "Autobiography" are the reminiscences of a St Helens glassblower in the 1920s and a Nottingham woman's memories of "digging for victory" (as well as an extract from Ronald Blythe's *The View in Winter*, and fragments by such writers as Graham Greene, Sylvia Plath and Norman Nicholson). Pointedly, there is no section devoted to "The Novel", nothing on "The Short Story", "The Poem" or any other such literary category. Unlike the other three textbooks I have mentioned (even Don Shiach's has section headings like "Narrative Prose" and "Diction—the Language of Poetry"; David Self's, for all its welcome originality, includes examiners' reports and traditional compare-and-contrast questions), *Varieties of Writing* is intentionally concerned with informal, casual, workaday English—the language of diaries, newspapers, and letters.

This will be one of the concerns of the new syllabuses. Revealing details of the London Examining Board's proposed alternative A-level, in an article headlined "A-level English as she is spoke", *The Observer* (29 July 1984) reported that "an essential part of the examination will be the recording and transcription of talk in everyday use. Correct answers will be expected to contain slang, dialect and grammatical or punctuation errors." Unorthodox as this seems, it could come as a relief to employers who doubt the value of Chaucer and Milton. The article goes on:

> "The pilot papers for the London board include questions on such examples of dialect as 'Our teachers can't learn us anything' and 'We never had the TV in them days when we was lads'. Candidates are asked to discuss what is meant by 'Standard English'. . . ."

To do that, of course, they will first have to be able to recognise and write it themselves.

A hopeful strategy—or Danegeld to illiteracy? I wish I could be sure. Few at present can be satisfied with the state of Advanced Level English Literature. Its aims may be high: but its standards need scrutiny, and its would-be students need better preparation earlier on. At present, the pressure for change is in a populist direction. Should we not be pressing equally for better teaching of English as a language, for textbooks which at least do more than reinforce an unsatisfactory *status quo*, and for better general knowledge of our legacy from the past?

AT ALL EVENTS, change is coming; but it is coming slowly. It would be a mistake to assume that the appearance of one book, similar tendencies in a clutch of others, and even the predisposition to change being shown by one examining board, mean that any radical reform is imminent. The London "alternative" syllabus has still to satisfy the Schools Examination Council. If it is approved, the first candidates will not be sitting it until June 1987.

Even its adoption would be merely a first move. Educational innovation seldom happens overnight. Some may be reassured by the hope that books such as *Varieties of Writing* could help students to become competent users of standard, well-spelt English. More pessimistic observers may draw comfort from the thought that Shakespeare, Chaucer, Hardy, Dickens, Jane Austen, Pope, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and even John Milton are still safely set on the sixth-form curriculum—and will continue to be so, at least for the next decade.

Theale Churchyard

(for my nephew Fergus)

The lightest touch of wind
that parts the leaves of grass
along the level moor,
or lets us hear a latch
tapping the casement glass
that's left an inch ajar,
is eloquent enough.

The light moves slowly up
the hills across from us
while cattle feed beneath.
In deeper silence here,
beside his little grave
we have small use for speech,
missing an absent breath.

Tim Dooley

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Books Encountered

David Mamet. By C. W. E. Bigsby. Methuen, £3.50.

A very alert and informed addition to the *Contemporary Writers* series, this essentially places the author of *Glengarry, Glen Ross* in the Dos Passos/Arthur Miller/John Updike tradition of affirming American values by exposing their misapplication.

Television Today and Tommorrow: Wall-to-Wall Dallas? By Christopher Dunkley. Penguin, £2.95.

Excellent diagnosis, but weaker prognosis, of increasingly Reithless British TV, beset by cable, satellite, and video recording, and liable to succumb to mass tastes. No mention of how Europe might collectively resist.

The Inner I: British Literary Autobiography of the Twentieth Century. By Brian Finney. Faber, £14.95.

Sensitive, subtle, only occasionally pedestrian study of private v. public selves, from W. H. Davies to John Osborne, by the author of the best book so far on Christopher Isherwood, who also figures here.

Commonplace Book. By E. M. Forster. Edited by Philip Gardner. Scolar Press, £25.

Fascinating, unbuttoned readings-plus-musings, 1925-68, amounting to a Portrait of the Artist as a Senior Citizen. Impeccably edited, triumphantly bookish, it whets the appetite for its slimmer unpublished companion, Forster's 1909-1967 diary.

Novelists in Interview. By John Haffenden. Methuen, £12.95, paper £4.95.

Paris Review style interviews with 14 writers from Martin Amis to Fay Weldon: the major figures include William Golding, Iris Murdoch, and V. S. Pritchett. Haffenden is more literary than the Paris reviewers—there's less about longhand and desk-lamps, more about intention and art.

The New Review Anthology. Edited by Ian Hamilton. Heinemann, £12.95.

An outstanding collection of stories, poems, and articles from the five years and fifty issues of *The New Review* (1974-79), crammed with Encounter contributors and a worthy memorial to the Arts Council's patronage of literature.

More Letters of Oscar Wilde. Edited by Rupert Hart-Davis. John Murray, £12.50.

Le poète n'est point fait de ses lettres, as Claudel so nearly put it. Wilde saved his best remarks for the stage and the table; but Sir Rupert's diligence and skill have assembled further revealing glimpses of the dandy in his dressing-room, the grease-paint only half-applied.

Günter Grass. By Ronald Hayman. Methuen, £2.25.

Another Contemporary Writer, this time deftly placed in German tradition, with aptly harsh chapter-titles—"Disinfectant literature", "Floundering"—and a just assessment of the later works, minor compared to *The Tin Drum*.

My Life in the Silver Screen. By Gerald Kaufman. Faber, £9.95.

Amusing, slightly orotund memoirs of a movie fan, at present Britain's Shadow Home Secretary. His memory, or his filing system, is phenomenal, his taste unashamedly quirky, his mock naivety a bit of a strain.

Rebel: The Short Life of Esmond Romilly. By Kevin Ingram. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

Nephew of Winston Churchill, Spanish Civil War volunteer, husband of Jessica Mitford, and killed at the age of 23 in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Romilly was the archetypal member of the Hons and Rebels. A chilling life that gives you all the facts.

Orson Welles: A Biography. By Barbara Leaming. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

With interspersed comments from its subject and assiduous quarrying of other people's memories, this is a bustling affair, verging on the Orson Welles chat show. Good on acting and the theatre, but over-obsessed by the love-life and flimsy on the films.

The Hogarth Letters. Introduced by Hermione Lee. Chatto & Windus, £9.95.

Twelve open letters commissioned by the Woolfs in 1931-32, from E. M. Forster, Rosamond Lehmann, Rebecca West, Hugh Walpole, etc. Mrs Woolf's "A Letter to a Young Poet" survives best; Walpole's, to a Modern Novelist, worst.

Through Brown Eyes. By Prafulla Mohanti. Oxford University Press, £9.50.

Sharp, hypnotic, lethally deadpan view of Britain by an Indian architect, painter, and teacher of dance and yoga. "When I first arrived, London was a safe place to live in. Gradually, violence had become a natural part of life."

Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman. By Nancy B. Reich. Gollancz, £15.95.

Meticulous study, partly based on new material, of the troubled prodigy who combined so many roles: concert artist, teacher, mother, wife and protector of Robert Schumann, rebellious daughter but disciple of Friedrich Wieck—a Suzuki method teacher before his time.

Paths from a White Horse: A Writer's Memoir. By Peter Vansittart. Quartet Books, £11.95.

Startlingly original, precariously bound, microscopically indexed reminiscences by a skilful, profound, often erudite novelist. The book traces memories in coils and clusters, not chronological straight lines. "I am interested in figures in labyrinths." Few can paint such vivid Lascaux murals.

Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form. By Marina Warner. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.95.

Another labyrinthine exploration, invoking many periods and most of the arts, and revealing with wit and learning how women's bodies have been used as symbols—prurient, patriotic, noble, soppy, terrifying, tender, creative. Sumptuous, sometimes comic illustrations; no feminist (or anti-feminist) cant.

Ted Hughes. By Thomas West. Methuen, £2.75.

More densely written than the other *Contemporary Writers* essays noticed here, this distinguishes convincingly the two "voices" in Hughes's work: the "ordinary man" and the visionary. It leaves open whether a third—the Laureate's—will arise from the assurance of *River* (1984).

Postscript: *The Courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett* by Daniel Karlin (Oxford University Press, £12.95), is mildly, not "wildly" revisionist as I inadvertently said last month.

R.M.

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Orwell & Tribune

By T. R. Fyvel

IT IS USEFUL that Leo Labedz prefaced his "Will George Orwell Survive 1984?" (ENCOUNTER, June, July-August 1984) with a quotation from Malcolm Muggeridge saying "How fascinating to live long enough to meet one's own world as history and to find it barely recognisable"—because not only the Orwellism he castigates but Mr Labedz's own article underlines Muggeridge's point.

I can go along with Mr Labedz in what he says about Raymond Williams' pretty awful book about Orwell and even in a few of his points against Bernard Crick. But when Mr Labedz writes about Orwell's relations with *Tribune* from 1943 to 1948, his picture bears little resemblance to my own fairly clear memories of my time as Orwell's successor as literary editor and general writer on *Tribune*. Indeed, Mr Labedz reinforces for me the whole danger of rewriting history on the basis of quotations inevitably taken out of the context of their own time and place.

Mr Labedz makes much, for instance, of Orwell's annoyance around 1947 over *Tribune*'s apparently lenient treatment of that well-known Communist fellow-traveller, Konni Zilliacus. I can here tell Mr Labedz that I myself was the culprit. When a new book by Zilliacus passed across my desk, I told our acting editor, Evelyn Anderson, that I wanted to write a piece about it which should be ironical but also gentle.

Why? asked Mrs Anderson. Well, I said, during the War I had in my psychological warfare work sometimes used this technique, and it would be interesting to see what might happen—some readers might write in in protest; Zilliacus might reply; a stir might be created.

Very reluctantly, as I recall, Mrs Anderson agreed; but the feint fell flat. No one wrote in, except that a stern missive over our failure to expose Konni Zilliacus came from George Orwell on Jura. Later—much later—I had a chance to explain the matter to Orwell, who thought it not a good joke; nor (by this time) did I. But I never could imagine that the matter would be cited some forty years on as political evidence in a journal like ENCOUNTER.

Mr Labedz cites Orwell's 1947 critique of *Tribune*'s anti-American tone, but here again the facts need to be known. True, in a letter of 1948 (from Jura) Orwell actually wrote that "the evil genius of *Tribune* is Crossman, who influences it through Foot and Fyvel." In his isolation, however, Orwell was wrong. Crossman had nothing to do with *Tribune*. Michael Foot was busy at Westminster; I myself wrote politically only about the Palestine conflict, and then on rather pro-American lines. The criticisms of US policy voiced in *Tribune* were focused mainly on the thorny question of West German rearmament and they were formulated by Evelyn Anderson with the guidance of Richard Lowenthal, later to become the famous professor in Berlin, but at the time contributing unsigned notes to *Tribune*.

I imagine that Mr Labedz would agree that Mrs Anderson and Rix Lowenthal's credentials in being "realistic about the Soviet Union" were no less than his own. But they were also convinced Socialists, with strong sympathies for the newly reconstituted German Socialist party, the *SPD*. In line with the German Socialists, and with Aneurin Bevan's approval, Mrs Anderson and Rix Lowenthal opposed Chancellor Adenauer and the US policies in their support of German rearmament. In their opposition they perhaps sounded more anti-American than they should have done or, as Orwell thought, than they meant to do. I thought so, and Orwell said so.

AS WAS LATER SHOWN under the reigns of the German Socialist Chancellors, Brandt and Schmidt, given Soviet attitudes, German rearmament was probably inevitable—and yet, with Hitler only a few years gone, it was a question involving traumatic heart-searching. The point is that in their arguments against rearmament Evelyn Anderson and Rix

WE RECORD with much sadness the death of T. R. Fyvel, in the south of France, at the age of 78. He was, in the year 1953, one of the "founding fathers" (with Fredric Warburg, our first publisher) of ENCOUNTER; and for over three decades he remained a regular contributor to these pages and a steadfast friend in many crises. His was a liberal and humane mind, cosmopolitan, endlessly curious and inquiring, and rarely without a quizzical note of scepticism. His most characteristic intellectual mode was a slight smile, a short laugh, and a firm reply to a question with yet another question. This article is, regrettably, Tosco's last "dissenting opinion." On p. 76 we publish a personal appreciation by his friend PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE.

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Lowenthal were legitimate, just as Orwell in his objection to these arguments was legitimate. The whole debate was legitimate and those who took part in it all thought of themselves as Socialists. Mr Labedz in trying to depict it as a deep rift between Orwell and a fellow-travellerish *Tribune* is quite wrong; and if he thinks that the differences had any effect on Orwell's good relations with Mrs Anderson, he is equally mistaken.

As far as I can gather, what Mr Labedz tries to say by quotation is that *Tribune* was always fellow-travellerish and that Orwell was never *with* his colleagues on *Tribune* but stood out *against* them. To do this, he suggests that the Orwell years on *Tribune* were no different from what came before and after, and that Orwell was naive in thinking that they were.

By all the evidence—and here Mr Labedz seems intent on discovering what everybody knows—this will not do. Quite true, *Tribune* under entirely different management was at the start of the War simplistically pro-Soviet. However, in 1942, aided by George Strauss, Aneurin Bevan took over as editor, with Jon Kimche and Evelyn Anderson running the office and Orwell presently joining them as literary editor; and *Tribune* became a totally different weekly. The task under Bevan in wartime was that of creating an independent, anti-Communist, democratic and socialist opposition voice. It was a task in which Orwell felt he shared, and which was continued post-War when Michael Foot took over from Bevan and I succeeded Orwell. If Orwell criticised *Tribune*, it was for what he saw as deviations from this task.

Inevitably, those concerned soon scattered. Evelyn Anderson, the last to go, left (I think) in 1952. By that time we had entered the very different and sour era of the conflict between Bevanism and Gaitskell, and *Tribune* became quite a different paper again, which I read only intermittently. But in between this before and after, from around 1943 to 1948, *Tribune* with its various editors and contributors had had its moment as an independent, Left-wing, anti-Communist voice, a moment whose greatest ornament was of course Orwell. Contrary to what Mr Labedz seems to think, Orwell identified himself with *Tribune* and liked *Tribune*. He liked his colleagues (even those who were to him foreign Jews); he fully appreciated the platform it gave him for his witty shorter pieces; he liked the chats in the office and taking the secretaries out to tea.

Inevitably we had our differences on *Tribune*. They were of the time. For instance, Orwell and I argued constantly about Jews, Arabs, and Palestine; but we thought of ourselves as a group. Of course there were contrasts between Aneurin Bevan (about whose political realism I had some reservations) and Orwell: differences of origin, temperament and on points of political outlook. But while on one notable occasion (which I have described elsewhere[1]) I persuaded Orwell not to publish an attack on Nye Bevan in office, I know that the two men respected and liked each other. Orwell was always prompted by a sardonic touch in his make-up to censure his friends—see his scathing review of *The Heart of the Matter* by his friend Graham Greene; or even more his review in the *New Statesman* of *Darkness at Noon* by his friend Arthur Koestler, a review so magisterially severe that Kingsley Martin (none other) reviewed it again with praise the following week.

In short, as I think back on those long-ago Orwellian *Tribune* years, I have warm memories of them as a positive moment in the lives of many talented political and literary writers—memories quite contrary to Mr Labedz's notion that Orwell was always really against us. He should be seen as a writer with premonitions of genius, but also as a man with friends, with eccentricities, with his own contradictions, and not just a walking political opinion to be quoted without context forty years on.

[1] T. R. Fyvel, *George Orwell: A Personal Memoir* (Hutchinson, 1983).

Hark

A partial listener, I always find
spaces in the dark, some missing sound
where landmarks fail me, on familiar ground:
the dripping tap, the rattle of the blind
that should have been. A distance in the mind
invades those silences; the night resounds
for giddy moments, something must be found
to anchor me, and keep the world defined:
perhaps I catch the rattle of a door,
a creaking gate, where nothing was before,
or something rolling sidelong in the floor,
before the darkness slams shut in my face
and things cascade forever into space
as if I dropped a book, and lost my place—

John Cameron Burnside

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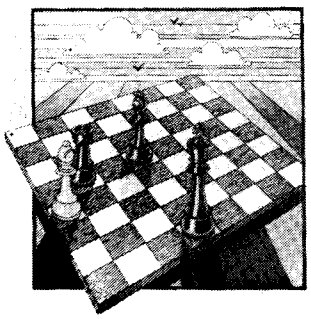
EDUCATION

Swann-Song of Prejudice

Thoughts on "Racism in Schools"—By DENNIS J. O'KEEFFE



Why is it that intellectual life seems so often inclined to misanthropy? Why is the contemporary West so given to self-denigration, and, in particular, British scholars so frequently disposed to make light of a history as outstanding as theirs has been? The rule of law, comparative affluence and longevity in this vale of tears, the containment of intolerance and its relegation to the despised margins of civilised life—there is a good case for the view that the British played a leading role in initiating all these advances.

Nor do capitalism and democracy, the two masterpieces of the British genius, look remotely played out. Indeed, despite distressing unemployment and the persistence of unacceptable inflation, there are good grounds for thinking that middle-class civilisation, with its "bourgeois values" in a capitalist world—a large and growing one—is poised for an increase in productiveness and affluence on a scale hitherto unknown. We look set to roll back the margin of scarcity even more drastically than two centuries of economic development have done. And wouldn't the optimistic case be much strengthened if influential intellectuals had a deeper understanding of what has been achieved already? Yet the proverbial visitor from Mars, taking a longer view of modern Western history than its participants usually can, might well detect the paradox that at the very time when our material powers have waxed dramatically so our spiritual convictions seem to have waned.

Nowhere, alas, is the contradiction more bitter than in Great Britain; nowhere is it more savage and unjustifiable than in contemporary British writings on race relations; and nowhere are the self-inflicted wounds of publicly-financed *angst* more in evidence than in Lord Swann's recent Report, *Education For All*.[1]

Education For All is a vast, rambling document; but in so far as it belongs anywhere theoretically, it is to the camp of soft, sub-Marxist anxiety. It is riddled with moral and cultural relativism—a position whose irresistible entailment is that there is no such thing as progress, a standpoint which surely makes the Committee's determination to eliminate this country's alleged cultural malpractices contradictory. If no one culture is really any better than any other, why should our cultural outlook be in such need of change?

My concern is with analysis of the *context* of Swann, rather than with the text itself. But two themes recur repeatedly and can be found more or less wherever the reader dips in. The first is that the British are "racist", and the second is that government must spend a great deal of money on an administrative structure to combat this. In Chapter 2 ("Racism: Theory and Practice") the Report espouses the now popular conceptual abomination that "racism" can occur unintentionally. It gives as an example the unmet need for separate language centres for Asian children, but an infinity of charges is possible. Identify an unmet "need", spot a less-than-average performance by some non-Anglo-Saxon group—and the situation can promptly be condemned as "racism."

The idea of immorality without ill-intent is obvious nonsense. Could we have "murder" without murderous intent or "theft" without intent to steal? Clearly we could not, but "racism" is deviously made to span both malice and accident. Coarse categories are bound to be favoured by a campaign which under the guise of refining our sensibilities seeks to coarsen us, to persuade us of the truth of the monstrous charge that our schools (i.e. school-teachers) are "racist."

The infelicities of the central chapter ("Education For All") are worthy of a book in their own right. I hope, however, that most teachers will reject this statement (the italics are in the original):

> ". . . we do not see schools as having a responsibility for cultural *preservation*."

I can only say that if the preservation and transmission of culture are not what teaching is about, then I have wasted my professional life this last quarter-of-a-century.

Let me dwell on this repeated allegation that the British are "racist." This is in my view a gross slander, and is quite at odds with the brute facts of the matter. Britain has absorbed, in 40 years, some three million non-whites, and many more non-Anglo-Saxons, with remarkably little trouble. Many of them have prospered mightily, enriching themselves and the host community. Only one ageing, lonely, leading political figure in all of the land has ever tried to make opposition to

[1] *Education For All: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*. Chairman: Lord Swann, F.R.S.E. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, £24.00.

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their presence a major plank in his platform. The attempt quite ruined his career. Nor has the British proto-Nazi party, the National Front, made any headway in its efforts to attach mass support to its campaign of hatred and vilification. The contempt which most Britons feel for this collection of failed pedagogues and slum proletarians is revealed in an unbroken chain of lost electoral deposits. Yet Swann opines that we are "racist."

There must be some phenomenon to which so recurrent a pattern of misperception relates. That phenomenon, I believe, is not *deep* prejudice, but mild preference; not entrenched hatred of foreigners but an irritated, perhaps frustrated regard for self, for "one's own." The ordinary working people of our big cities have had to adjust very quickly to the presence of many newcomers who look, dress, speak and live differently, sometimes very differently, from themselves. On this huge change in their circumstances they were not consulted. They have borne it all patiently and well; most of them, like most of the newcomers, conducting themselves with admirable tolerance and dignity. Eruptions such as the turbulence at Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham, however appalling, are sporadic; they are neither well understood nor convincingly explained by crude indictments of the police; and it is surely rubbing salt into slight wounds on all sides to call the lingering grumpiness of empire, the poor residual slights of history, by this ghastly current neologism "racist".

The recent disturbances in some inner-city areas have indeed been frightening. However, it seems very unlikely that any single cause could be convincingly adduced. The cry will doubtless now be heard that yet more public funds for "enlightenment" should be spent, but the initial grounds for thinking of race relations as a case where for once government can spend its way out of trouble are not very persuasive. Such a proposal embraces not one but two controversies. Even if unemployment were the key problem, the curative effects of raised government expenditure are highly controversial. And unemployment cannot conceivably be more than a general context for violent disturbance, given that *most* unemployed people (of whatever race) do *not* behave in criminal fashion, and that some rioters (including some of those arrested) are not even of employment age. To say that *X* behaves in riotous fashion because *Y* is unemployed is to invoke a kind of telepathic causality.

Moreover, since race is our worry, it needs to be said that not all the law-breakers in this turmoil, including those charged, are black; and though it appears that a majority are, it is clear that most black people neither do these things nor support them. The primitive criminality of theft and looting is one aspect of the upheavals, and the role of planned, commercial criminality of various types (e.g. drug-pushing) will perhaps be uncovered in time as one of the causes. At present one is reduced to listing the components of a loose complex of influences: dwindling demand for unskilled labour, and on the supply side an unhelpful immobility of workers; inadequate parental and school control of young people; misunderstandings and mutual antagonism building up between the "system" and some sections of the black population; the effect of television and newspapers; and, perhaps most important, the effects of a sustained and politicised attack on British society and its institutions (especially the police), whether of local or outside origin. One hesitates to call so motley a rag-bag of factors an "explanation"; but a glibber and more sinister explanation is already widely on offer: that these demented happenings are the outcome of "British racism" in general and the police version of racism in particular.

This charge is hardly convincing. Let us remember that the police are simultaneously accused of "not protecting" Asians and of "harassing" blacks. Can it seriously be predicated that either, much less both, of these policies could be on the police agenda, even covertly? How could such a criminal conspiracy, which a handful of honest police staff could expose, survive in a climate as predisposed to criticism as ours? It is much more likely that the opposite is true, and the quite unacceptable bigotry of a minority of the police has been inflated into a general indictment. Fortunately, it seems unlikely that such accusations will appeal for long, now that there is clear evidence of planned mayhem.

IT MUST INDEED BE INTOLERABLE to feel that your black face is disliked or your Gujarati accent mimicked. Yet is it not time that we took on board Maureen Stone's view?—black people are not ashamed of being black and do not have a poor self-image.[2] Many Asians are already very successful economically; they have penetrated many levels of business and most of the professions. There is no reason to think that our citizens of Afro-Caribbean origin will not follow suit, in time. Like the American blacks, their background is slavery followed by low earnings in marginal agricultural employment. Once they have adjusted to the economic culture of an urban life, once they have accumulated the necessary human capital, they may be expected to "normalise", and their statistical/occupational profile will come to resemble that of the wider community, as the black American economist Thomas Sowell claims is already coming to be the case in the United States.[3]

When discomfort, even systematic discomfort, is confused with systematic disadvantage, great distortion can follow. Now that classical Marxism has failed so hopelessly as an expropriating socio-economy of state property, its devotees a withered and stranded rump quite incapable of any full-frontal theoretical appeal, how convenient that a back-door neo-Marxism can be institutionalised—smuggled in, moreover, on the back of a generous indignation. Racial prejudice *is* offensive, whether one looks at it from the position of liberal rationalism, or out of the belief that all of us are made in divine image and likeness; or from both these perspectives. But that is the whole point. The Marxisant tendency derives its elasticity and adaptability from its magisterial roots: it is the parasite of the Enlightenment and the ape of religion. Its envious inspiration is stone-dead *vis-à-*

[2] Maureen Stone, *The Education of the Black Child in Britain* (Fontana, 1981).
[3] Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America* (Basic Books, 1981).

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vis property. Every decade that passes reveals more clearly that the property-war between the classes is a figment of indignant minority imaginations rather than an objective phenomenon. What a Godsend, then, to an ailing God-failed cause, has been the emergence of "the race question"! Nor can one deny the genius of an intellectual structure so adept at stringing out a life whose original logic has seemingly expired, so successful at refusing to define the grounds of refutation, and so adroit at absorbing the damage of contrary instances. The movement's appropriations of the politics of race and gender are brilliant demonstrations of its powers of survival, its ability to give itself conceptual transfusions from causes coming conveniently to hand.

Let us absorb, then, enough historical materialism to observe the more tangible rewards of the case. A huge industry has been erected, a hate-relations complex, where scoundrels, opportunists, and the sworn enemies of the free society can rub shoulders with well-meaning dupes at the public expense. The contradiction between the successful economic life of advanced capitalism (with its growing and manifest functional indifference to the race or gender of its economic agents) and a misanthropic intellectual culture (turning grotesquely between the poles of guilt and envy) is sustained by public monies.[4]

On closer inspection, however, the paradox lessens, for general economic development and intellectual life, though intimately and increasingly bonded, have different constituencies. An advanced society cannot operate without a generalised economic culture; it requires that most people be socialised into a market code, that is to say, "internalise" the principles of capitalist transactions. Intellectual life, by stark contrast, is a minority concern, and inherently more élitist and socialistic than most economic life, precisely because it is in the main publicly financed. Its "social" character is distressingly apparent in the small part most people play in its decisions. For example, it is my educated guess that the now widely institutionalised view that British society is "deeply racist" has been inspired and disseminated in the first instance by remarkably few people. Nor has this institutionalisation, again in contrast to capitalist innovations, been much

[4] *Education For All* cost the British tax-payer £692,618 (see p. v).

Of Intolerance & Mild Prejudice

Colour Set

London

LAST *night Channel 4 screened the last but one "Black on Black", the magazine billed as being for, and from, "the Afro-Caribbean community." It has been running for three years and will have finished by the end of this month.*

This demise is to be warmly welcomed. The programme's regular round-up of international news is succinct and wide-ranging. Presenters Beverly Anderson and Pauline Black are excellent. There have been countless interesting items. But it is the very concept *of the programme that is absurd and questionable.*

At its core it enshrines—as logically it must—a philosophy of racial separateness. After all, what does a rich Nigerian have in common with a poor Jamaican, a visiting Kenyan economist with an offspin bowler from Barbados, the son of a labourer from St Lucia with a Harlem nightclub owner.

THE ANSWER **of course is nothing, *unless* you take the position that what is primarily important about them is that they all have black skins and some facial similarities, and that this is enough to provide some strange communion between them.**

"Black on Black" encourages people to think of themselves as different, not because of education, class, religion, language, sexual proclivities or hobbies, but purely and simply because they are of a particular colour. This has shades of South Africa (which also has programmes for different racial groups), and one wonders how on earth it can do anything to heal, rather than foster, British social divisions.

On one programme in May I caught a Juilliard-trained New York trumpeter, Wynton Marsalis, who had (uniquely) gained Grammy awards for both classical and jazz. But he was appearing on television that night not because he was a fine musician but because he was *black*. A reflection on our priorities.

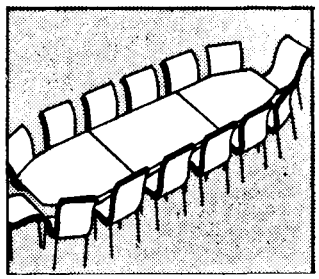
Recent events in Wembley and Philadelphia have suggested that the community which counts is not that of "Afro-Caribbeans" but of people; and the key division between them is of wealth, not colour.

Ghettos on television, like ghettos in the city, do nobody any favours.

Paul Donovan
in the DAILY MAIL *(London)*

Anglo-Saxon Attitudes

Horsham, Sussex



STEPS *to combat racism in West Sussex schools were demanded during a meeting of the schools subcommittee. Dr James Walsh (Rustington) said racism was an insidious influence that crept into schools from time to time. "It is a fashion that comes in waves", he declared. "There is increasing evidence of attempts by extremist groups like the National Front to infiltrate literature into schools."*

Douglas Mayne (Broadfield) said the county schools should adopt clear policies on racism. Speaking during a debate on the Swann Report, "Education for All", he claimed it was not unknown for people from ethnic minorities to be treated "with less than kindness."

Headmaster Stephen Love said that although most West Sussex schools were solidly Anglo-Saxon, there was racism in one form or another. "It is an ugly aspect of our contemporary society. Britain is a racially pluralistic society and young people should be made aware of the issues which the Swann Report seeks to bring into public concern."

Bob Rudd (Tilgate) said the Swann report should be placed on the agenda of school governors' meetings and

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subject to critical government scrutiny with regard to "public health" or "safety"; it has certainly not run, nor could it survive, the gauntlet of any market judgment. Yet here it sits entrenched, a topic for major legislation, a public milch-cow for the out-relief of missionaries with less than impeccable credentials, a campaign of cultural and political subversion already half-way along its long march through the institutions. I wonder, for example, whether the members of the Swann Committee, quoting with evident approval from a book on "World Studies",[5] realise just how thoroughly that "subject" has been Marxianised. . . .

Of course the crusade has not yet triumphed. Most people of all races in our now mixed communities do not accede to its gloomy principles. The widening of the lugubrious circle would entail the extension of nationalised production, something the Marxian world has done with dismal effectiveness. This is a point not lost, I am sure, on the working class, who know that it entails pessimism about the world and its future; ingrained contempt for the interests and judgments of ordinary people; sullen insistence on playing ducks-and-drakes with other people's money. Nor are these monopolised by the moguls of militant trade-unionism. They are present in intellectual life, more common among university professors than bus-drivers—vivid testimony to the now increasingly realised dysfunctionality of modern education systems in free societies. The longer you stay, the worse you tend to get.

Nothing better exemplifies the loss of intellectual and moral nerve suffered in the 20th century by the British upper classes than the generation of an intellectual climate in which Swann could figure as a serious document. Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make self-denigratory. Orwell, as usual ahead of the field, observed 40 years ago that your average English intellectual felt that there was something shameful about being English. That roll of self-inflicted dishonour now includes being male, middle-class, clever, heterosexual and Caucasian.

Swann is by no means the worst example of its genre. It specifically disclaims the view, to be found in ILEA (Inner expense, to the children of Gujarati and Sikh shopkeepers (and even some whites) are "black", that "racism" can only be white, and that *all* whites are possessed by it. Indeed the Report bears the marks of internal resistance to these absurd claims, advanced by highly organised agitation; but the internal battle seems to have enfeebled the endeavour, leaving it drifting, aimless, and diffuse.

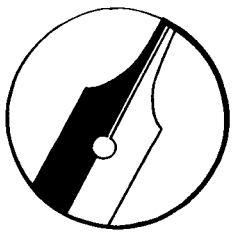
discussed. And Mr Wilfred Archer urged the sub-committee to express "clear enthusiastic support" for what the report said. "There has to be some sort of commitment", he said. "Schools need clear guidance."

THE CHAIRMAN **of the county council, Peter Shepherd (Storrington), warned against confusing "mild prejudices" with the institutionalised intolerance implied by the term racism. "They are quite different", he declared.**

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES

Swann's Way

London



TODAY we face a new problem, the increasing politicisation of race. Sometimes it leads to a refusal to co-operate in fighting racism, which puzzles enthusiasts newly converted to the benefits of working with minorities.

Earlier this year the Swann Committee reported on the education of ethnic minorities. It should have been a significant document because, everybody agrees, good schooling of children is a key to removing obstacles to economic progress for the communities and also a key to fighting prejudice. One of the more baffling questions is the cause of under-achievement in West Indian children, an issue on which there are plenty of theories but few facts.

When a research project was proposed it was immediately killed by the West Indians. They feared that it would turn into an attack on their family way of life and refused to co-operate. Sadly Lord Swann, a scientist brought in to provide some intellectual rigour to the inquiry, had to drop the idea.

Paul Williams
in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

WHAT IS the race problem? what causes it? what can we do about it? Swann has little convincing or even interesting to say on any of these three crucial questions. The problem then, is one of coherence. The unstable composition of the committee—there were nine resignations—and the wavering lines of emphasis that surface are testimony to a battle of ideas and sentiments that would be appropriate to a book of for-and-against-a-thesis essays, or even to a protracted public struggle between rival schools of philosophy or social science; but they cannot be expressed coherently in Report form. Differing viewpoints, sometimes erupting into dissensus and minority positions, are the stuff of large-scale commissions; but in this instance the work has the appearance of initial inputs so radically irreconcilable that nothing applicable could be expected to result. One possible and highly rational line of inquiry would have sought to trace some possible connections between, say, the one-parent family and the low-achieving child. The project was angrily suppressed. A *Times* leader (15 March 1985) put it quite delicately:

> "Conflict within the committee itself prevented it from pursuing its proposed *factual survey* [italics added] into the social circumstances of successful and unsuccessful pupils in each major ethnic group."

The report is thus true to a powerful sentiment or protocol that has guided much recent educational discussion in this

[5] *Education For All*, p. 329. The book in question is *Teaching World Studies* (ed. Hicks and Townley, Longman, 1982). This is a work in the neo-Marxist camp, and regards liberal society about as favourably as does *Mein Kampf*.

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country: no one must have his or her feelings hurt by what is done or said.

The governing protocols of educational debate on race questions tend, admittedly, to be arbitrary and shifting. The only constancy is a syndicalist one: the "experts" know best (even if they disagree among themselves). Thus arises the anomaly that a doctrine which is the most common contemporary face of neo-Marxism can be taught, at public expense, to the children of Gujarati and Sikh shopkeepers and devout Jamaican Protestants, as well as to the children of one of the most consistently anti-Communist proletariats in the world.

THE CENTRAL DEVICE is a politicised dichotomy between whites and non-whites. This makes a certain chronological sense in this country (though not in the USA); but it makes no functional sense, that is to say it does not capture the bit of the world we live in. There are many Asian millionaires in Great Britain, and Swann's qualifications about Bangladeshis will not alter the brilliance of the Asian performance in the British economy in recent decades. The point about a dichotomised system of "whites" and "non-whites" is not its explanatory but its inflammatory power.

The material resources that have gone into the so-called study of race and the large institutional structure which has emerged guarantee a goodly flow of jobs for the agitators as long as, and only as long as, the theoretical and empirical pennies fail to drop. As long as no incisive approaches are developed, no sound and honest evidence made available, public funds will continue to be invested in nonsense. Ideological scoundrels maintain a deep interest in the failure and unhappiness of the people they purport to represent.[6]

Even the basic groundwork has not been done: and this is why so many writings in the area are uncomfortable. The awkward fact is that prima facie one might have expected citizens of Asian background to face *more* prejudice than those of Afro-Caribbean stock. Though Indians and Pakistanis are "more like" whites physically than blacks, they are far more different culturally and linguistically. But no one has yet constructed some kind of index of racism, or developed Peter Simple's notion of a "prejudometer", which measures people's prejudice at the touch of a button. So the question remains: if "racism" is integral to the low educational performanceof blacks, why does it not typically depress the performance of Asians?

The central weakness in Swann and in the surrounding literature (most of it more extreme than Swann) is that links are made between phenomena which have no necessary connection. Even if prejudice were as deep and ingrained as they say—and I dispute this—why should it have so much more impact on black than on Asian children, when the degree of dislike faced by the latter may—as I believe—be more intense?

THIS PARTICULAR EMBARRASSMENT comes to the surface, shamefaced and unresolved, in Lord Swann's personal gloss on the Report.

These are not foolish or ignorant men and women we are dealing with. We know, as they must know, that the virulent anti-Semitism of the Soviet Union, hiding behind "anti-Zionism" as the flimsiest camouflage, has not prevented outstanding personal performances by Russian Jewry. Nor are we moral cretins. If our British blacks performed *better* than anyone else educationally and economically, hatred of them would still be a moral abomination. The moral culpability of racial prejudice is not at issue. But it is putting too heavy a charge on hard-pressed budgets to assert expensive ideological connections; and arrant, manifest nonsense is what confronts us.

Swann quotes from a former Committee member, Professor Bhikhu Parekh, who has recently dealt with the proposition that "racism" cannot be the cause of black failure because of the obvious success of Asian children. Parekh points out that some black (West Indian) children succeed and some Asian children fail. "Racism", therefore, can be retained as an explanation of failure provided that we avoid the approach which "wrongly assumes that the same factor must always produce the same results."

This seems to imply that, at the very least, Asian children rather typically possess characteristics that West Indian children do not. Since it is undeniable that many white children fail at school also, might we not be better advised to try and uncover *common* sources of failure? Putting it another way, should we not look at what characteristics many white children have, and many Asians and some West Indian children have, which promote educability (in the case of non-whites, in the face of much prejudice)? We can say, if we like, that the presence of prejudice is a critical variable when characteristic X is absent but not when it is present. Wouldn't it make more sense, however, to say that characteristic X, and not prejudice, is the critical variable?

We understand enough about the reproduction of social stratification to know that most people's children come to occupy similar social positions to those of their parents. It is also the case that since technological change induces changes in the job-structure, very large net-upward social mobility occurs.[7] Bluntly, the proportion of unskilled jobs is shrinking, while that of more educated/skilled, "middle-class" jobs is rising. This puts human capital—labour whose productivity has been enhanced by education and training, job-search and migration, etc.—at a premium. Now, unless our labour markets are characterised by permanent ascriptive barriers to the advance of non-whites, or women, there is no need to

[6] There is, in London's Stepney, a block-long mural which is a characteristic piece of the new agit-prop. Once upon a time you would "demand the impossible", call for Utopian goods to keep the noble dream alive—Long live the revolution, Fight for mental health, Free George Jones! Here, among a vast panorama of the masses, are the current tags: EXPLOITATION, POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, RACISM. You walk by it, and morning, noon, and night it screams out at you: Have a miserable day!

[7] A. H. Halsey, A. F. Heath, and J. M. Ridge, *Origins and Destinations: Family, Class and Education in Modern Britain* (Oxford University Press, 1980).

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take a pessimistic and for-all-time view of the low penetration of the upper reaches of the job-hierarchy by, for example, blacks in Great Britain. My view is that racial and gender prejudice are essentially *pre*-capitalist, that is to say have their origins in a social order where markets were much less important in the organisation of human affairs than they become in a modern post-industrial economy.

The difficulty for black people is the reproductive cycle of inadequate human capital formation. The secular trend, it seems to me, is overwhelmingly towards the eradication of impediments to a "rational labour market." Education is certainly going to be crucial in the processes of socio-economic change—in that, Swann is correct. But I doubt if the problem is the "racism" of teachers. Rather it is the dysfunctionality of a syndicalist, producer-led, tendentious, anti-instrumental, and basically *anti-capitalist* curriculum.

NONE OF THIS IS TO DENY that the question of education connects intimately and comprehensively with the issue of ethnicity. However, questions of race can be subsumed under ordinary moral categories. "Racial prejudice" is not an isolated horror standing apart from other moral inadequacies. The Asians attacked by white thugs in East London are victims of the kind of moral failure which some young white hooligans from Liverpool recently displayed so frighteningly in Brussels. The mugging in which a small proportion of young black males engage is in no way different. We are all of us shamed and diminished by these failures of *our* families, *our* schools, *our* moral leaders.

Moreover, while the quantitative contribution of inadequate schooling to this failure in moral socialisation is not specifiable, there seems to me little problem about a *qualitative* specification. The English middle classes have been "running scared"—reluctant to articulate general standards of detailed moral behaviour except, paradoxically, in matters involving race and gender. The standard curricular experience of many children is now quite inadequate. Teachers often neither dare nor care to tell their pupils how to behave and at the same time they do not equip them mentally, vocationally, instrumentally. Many young people are thus in no way materially or ideally attached to the social order.[8]

The huge resources which have gone into the study of race have yielded a mediocre return. That great sociologist, Max Weber, has been neglected, though his idea that social phenomena should be considered *sui generis*, that is as not collapsing into each other, would seem to carry more promise than the neo-Marxist attempt to reduce racial prejudice to property/class relations.

The whole enterprise has also been constrained by guilt. It is true that the 18th- and 19th-century European trade in African slaves is a huge and indelible stain in our history, irremovable because history allows us no rerun. The trade was all the more odious in that it was organised by men whose own society had long transcended this ancient inhumanity. But guilt about events which ended almost two centuries ago is not a satisfactory basis for a sober contemporary politics. Moreover, if the past is to weigh heavily on the minds of the living, it would be as well to recall the achievements of a great history as well as its crimes or blemishes. In my view the great British achievement was the development of "capitalist democracy", to show the world that democracy in political life and the social "free market" in economic life are a workable combination.

Alongside a crazily one-sided and guilty view of British history goes a naive faith in some vague progressive, or "Left", or socialist solution to the race question. The most vociferous proponents of an administered solution to the problem are typically Left-wing politicians and intellectuals. The opposite view is less well-known and needs an airing. Racial prejudice, poverty, and despotism are the standard experiences of history, and only our free and open societies with their unprecedented productiveness and the impersonality of their markets seem remotely equipped to ameliorate and possibly eliminate them.

We must secure the physical safety of our citizens, but physical assault, such as Asians on our streets sometimes fear, is not, however horrible, the worst threat. Just as sound education is a crucial part of any solution, so bad education is the very worst threat that could be offered to the least successful segment of our school population. Young black people need to understand that it is not only pop music and sports, but also law and medicine and business which are open to the talents. They should be wary of ravening wolves coming to them in the guise of "Black Consciousness-Raising" or "the Anti-Ethnocentric Curriculum." This ideology of hatred has nowhere for its putative beneficiaries to go save down a cul-de-sac where they cannot escape. I have heard an ILEA adviser in Hackney say that many of his (often black) young people were "ideologically" unemployable—they would not take a job if it involved a three-mile bus-ride, or accept admonition for lateness or slackness; in short, they lack the outlook necessary for success in a work-culture.

WITHIN THE PRESENT FRAMEWORK of education it is hard to see how this bureaucratic leviathan of hatred and falsification can be reversed. Perhaps we should simply require that its curricular influence, like that of other tendentious fads or obsessions, confronts the citizen's personal pocket rather than the public purse. If some citizens want their own children to be instructed in one-sided versions of history and culture, and in views of relations between races and sexes which have certain foregone conclusions . . . well, let them. But let them pay also. Nothing illustrates more vividly the dysfunctional character of our education system than this edifice of ideological nonsense erected at the public expense. It would not survive six months if it had to be bought and paid for.

[8] One of the best indices remains little known. Truancy in Britain now operates on a huge scale, large enough to constitute a strong *prima facie* case for the view that secondary education is not among our more successful institutions.

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MEMOIR

Remembering Tosco Fyvel

By Peregrine Worsthorne

I FIRST MET T. R. (Tosco) Fyvel at an ENCOUNTER party in London in the mid-1950s. It was given, I think, for Thomas Mann and most of the other guests seemed and sounded like foreigners, speaking with strong Central European accents—Arthur Koestler, Michael Polanyi, Richard Lowenthal, Sebastian Haffner et al. or (then perhaps even more strange to my ears), with strong mid-Manhattan accents— Irving Kristol, Mel Lasky, Dan Bell, etc. Searching rather desperately for someone less outlandish to talk to, I espied a burly figure standing alone in a corner looking almost as much a fish out of water as I felt myself to be.

For some reason or other—possibly his tweedy, rumpled, baggy clothes which reminded me a bit of J. B. Priestley—I took him to be a 1930-ish Left-wing English intellectual, and although this was not a type which I would have chosen to spend an evening with, it was certainly more up my street than anybody else on offer. Not that the face in question looked particularly welcoming or in need of company. Rather the opposite—stern and almost scowling. Nevertheless, taking my courage in both hands, I approached and introduced myself and was then, for the first time, blessed with that sudden Tosco transformation (with which I was later to become so familiar), the frown falling away like a mask to reveal the most quizzical, humorous expression that there has ever been.

"Peregrine . . . unusual name . . . Peregrine Pickle, of course, but was there not also a Peregrine Towneley in Harrison Ainsworth's *Lancashire Witches*?"

There was—an ancestor of mine, as it happened—and we soon got talking about all sorts of other equally esoterically insular matters—such as, for example, why Oxford men are so much more likely to speak before they think than Cambridge men—none of which would normally be expected to crop up at such a cosmopolitan party.

Not until much later, and after several further meetings, did someone tell me that Tosco was not English at all, his father having been an early Zionist leader who as a young student in Vienna had in 1897 joined the founder-father, Theodor Herzl. Nor was Tosco even wholly educated in Britain, since his most formative years were spent in a Swiss-German school. Nothing about him at all was English, except an empathy for the country so intense and so profound that one could not avoid assuming that he must be English. This makes him sound as if he wanted to pass himself off for what he was not. Nothing could be further from the truth. He talked a lot about Continental Europe and much of the interest of his conversation sprang from his marvellous gift for illustrating English social attitudes by comparison with their European counterparts. But so detailed and exact was his knowledge of Britain that one tended to think, "Goodness, how rare for an Englishman to know so much about the Continent!" rather than the other way round.

IT COULD BE, of course, that Tosco's fascination with England sprang from his close friendship with George Orwell, whom he succeeded as literary editor of *Tribune* in 1945. They had got to know each other at the beginning of the War through the publisher Fred Warburg, who had entrusted Tosco with the task of commissioning a series of morale-boosting pamphlets outlining British "War Aims", one of which, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, was by Orwell. This was unquestionably Orwell's most optimistic book about Britain, even relatively well-disposed towards its class system and the ruling class itself, normally the target of Orwell's bitterest indictment. In this case, I suspect, the influence was of Tosco on Orwell, rather than the other way round, since it always seemed to me that Tosco had rather a soft spot for the English ruling class, judging it to be, for all its faults, less brutal and selfish—not to say less anti-Semitic—than those which his Continental forbears had had to put up with. Seen through the eyes of a European Jew, like Tosco, even pre-War Britain—let alone 1940 Britain—did not seem the reactionary hell-hole of the socialist imagination; and it would not surprise me at all if some of Orwell's new-found patriotism of that period did not stem directly from seeing Britain through Tosco's eyes during that crucial year.

In his memoir about George Orwell, Tosco describes this period marvellously well: how Orwell would talk about the post-War settlement which would transform slovenly Tory England into "an up-to-date socialist community capable of inspiring the world." Tosco comments: "I thought this was going a bit far; but still, with Britain standing alone and defeat not impossible, it seemed a time for utopian talk. . . ." How right! Tosco always got it right, and throughout the thirty years of our friendship I can never recall him getting a major issue wrong. Up to a point, of course, this was because he was a natural sceptic, never giving way to euphoria or despair. In this respect, he was a very useful counsellor to me—and to a host of other journalists and broadcasters—and I dare not think of how many times I have been deterred from writing folly by the sound of that sudden intake of breath and pursing of the lips which was Tosco's way of showing disagreement. Agreement was indicated by a twinkling smile which always sent my spirits rocketing upwards.

FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS of Tosco's life he and I used to lunch together about once a month, usually at the Garrick

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Club, and the first few minutes of our meetings were invariably given over to exchanging news about our respective families. Nor was this a mere formality. For him family matters came first, however earthshaking were the public events of the day. In my experience this order of conversational priorities is pretty rare among intellectuals, who usually start off and continue discussing public affairs, only finding time to ask about each other's wives and children as a perfunctory preliminary to saying goodbye. In the case of Tosco, however, it was quite impossible to get him to discuss the burning issues of the day until he had told one about, say, a grandson's recent triumph on the rugger field. (Tosco himself, incidentally, was very proud of having played rugger for Cambridge.) Some Garrick members—the less perspicacious ones—to whom I introduced Tosco at the club bar, found this boring, which was their loss, since his intense involvement in the day-to-day activities of his nearest and dearest galvanised him into noticing social developments and changes—in education, housing, local government, medicine etc.—which were also of great general interest. First came the family involvement and then, sparked off by it, some marvellously illuminating Tosco observation about current goings-on; observations all the more profound and imaginative for having been inspired, in the first place, by the experience of somebody especially close to his heart.

I LOVED his company and felt proud to play a walk-on role in a cast of friends which included, as well as Orwell, Orde Wingate (about whom he always spoke with special enthusiasm), Malcolm Muggeridge, and so many other memorable figures of the century. The pity is that he never wrote a personal memoir—being far too modest and self-effacing—the nearest to one being a chapter or two in his moving book on Orwell. There was so much sanity and decency, not to say wisdom, in everything he wrote and broadcast that the world would benefit from the record of such a force for good. As it is, those of us lucky enough to have benefited from knowing him will be conscious of our debt for the rest of our lives, particularly at testing times, requiring a choice between right and wrong, when his absence will be most acutely felt.

AUTHORS

Norman Levine's latest collection of short stories is *Champagne Barn*, a Penguin original (published in America this November by Viking Penguin). Some of his other books are: *Canada Made Me*, *From a Seaside Town*, *I Don't Want To Know Anyone Too Well*, and *Thin Ice*.

Adrian Smith, who was previously engaged in research at the Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature, is Senior Lecturer in Political and Social Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and is completing a study of defence management.

Melvin J. Lasky's *Utopia and Revolution* (1976) has been reissued this year as a Midway Reprint by the University of Chicago Press.

Simon Curtis teaches at the University of Manchester. Some of his poems appear in Faber's *Poetry Introduction 6*, published this spring.

Andrew Waterman's collections of poetry include *Out for the Elements* and *Over the Wall* (Carcanet, 1981, 1980).

Jean-Claude Casanova, Professor of Economics at the Sorbonne, is Editor of the quarterly journal *Commentaire*, and contributes a regular column to *L'Express*.

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph*. *Hummingbirds and Hyenas*, the sequel to his *Senate of Lilliput*, was published this autumn by Faber.

Jean-François Revel writes a column for the Paris journal *Le Point*; a collection of his pieces, *Le Rejet de l'état*, was published this spring by Grasset. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, appeared this year (Doubleday, New York; Weidenfeld, London).

E. J. Mishan has been Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics and Visiting Professor at various universities in Canada and the USA. His many books include *The Costs of Economic Growth* (1967), *Introduction to Normative Economics* (Oxford University Press, 1981), and *Introduction to Political Economy* (Hutchinson, 1982). His article "Was the Women's Liberation Movement Really Necessary?" appeared in the January 1985 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Ronald Hayman's autobiographical work *Secrets: A Jewish Childhood in the Thirties and Forties* (Peter Owen) and his study of Günter Grass (Methuen Contemporary Writers series) were published this autumn. His biography of Jean-Paul Sartre will appear in 1986, to join his biographies of Fassbinder (1984), Brecht (1983) and Kafka (1981), all published by Weidenfeld.

David Holbrook is Director of English Studies at Downing College, Cambridge. His *Education and Philosophical Anthropology* is to be published by Associated University Presses.

Hugh David taught English for five years in comprehensive schools and is now a freelance writer and journalist working regularly for *The Times Literary Supplement*. His other work includes five stage plays, and documentaries for the BBC.

Dennis O'Keeffe is Senior Lecturer in the Sociology of Education at the Polytechnic of North London and a member of the Advisory Council of the Social Affairs Unit. His article "Waiting for 1984", written with James McNamara, appeared in the December 1982 issue of ENCOUNTER. He is the editor of *The Wayward Curriculum*, to be published by the Social Affairs Unit early next year.

Peregrine Worsthorne is Associate Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* in London, for which he writes a weekly political column. His most recent book is *Peregrinations* (Weidenfeld, 1980).

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LETTERS

Nagel, Popper, Stove

SHORTLY *before he died—on 20 September, at the age of 83—Professor Ernest Nagel, one of the world's leading logicians and philosophers of science, wrote the following letter; since it is so pertinent to the controversy over D. C. Stove's critique of Sir Karl Popper in the June* ENCOUNTER *(see the ensuing stormy correspondence), we take the liberty of publishing it.* ED. NOTE.

I WRITE to congratulate you on publishing D. C. Stove's "Karl Popper & The Jazz Age" in the June issue of ENCOUNTER. It is a very telling and fascinating piece, and I greatly enjoyed reading it. In my judgment Stove's critique is sound, it in no way distorts Popper's views on science, and by and large it leaves much of Popper's main thesis pretty much in ruins. It is high time someone called a spade a spade.

But I confess that I was not only delighted but also surprised that you published the piece. In the many years I have been reading ENCOUNTER there has not been, to my recollection, any adverse comment in its pages on Popper—the one exception is in my review of Sir Peter Medawar's *The Art of the Soluble* in the September 1967 number, with which Medawar concurred in a letter to me but otherwise was a "lead balloon." Until Stove's essay appeared I had the impression that Popper was a sacred cow about whom nothing but agreement could be expressed. I am glad that my impression was mistaken.

You may perhaps be aware that I wrote a critical essay on Popper, entitled "The Quest for Uncertainty", which was published first in *Sidney Hook and the Contemporary World*, edited by Paul Kurtz (1968), and reprinted in my *Teleology Revisited* (1978).

ERNEST NAGEL

New York City

The Greek Ambassador Replies

IT IS HARD to see why Richard Cottrell (ENCOUNTER, March) has bothered to get himself involved in the debate over the future of the Parthenon Marbles. He is apparently in agreement that they ought to be returned to Greece, but dislikes the present Greek Government so much that he cannot bring himself to say so clearly. This leads him to the absurd thesis that, although the end is right, it is being pursued for the wrong reason, namely "to divert attention from internal disasters."

If Mr Cottrell kept himself at all informed about Greece, he would know that in the domestic arena the "Marbles" issue has been discussed with conspicuous moderation, which reflects also the Government's more general attitude on this. He would also avoid retailing such obvious fantasies as that life expectancy in Athens is now 45 years. Equally, if he knew a little more of modern Greek history, he would not find it "hard to recall much in the way of hand-to-hand combat over the Parthenon": presumably he is unacquainted with the events of the Greek War of Independence.

Governed by this confusion, Mr Cottrell has predictably opted for the politics of insult, a road down which we ourselves are not prepared to go. His unhealthy obsession with the person of Greece's Minister of Culture is expressed in a gratuitously offensive way, while his attempts to force analogies between Prime Minister Papandreou and General Galtieri are beneath contempt. All in all, I think we would prefer the Marbles to be returned to Greece, when the time comes, *without* Mr Cottrell's support.

NIKOS KYRIAZIDES

Greek Embassy
London

Stove's Popper

D. C. STOVE's ingenious attempt at debunking Karl Popper [ENCOUNTER, June] fails for one main reason: his taking it for granted that the premise from which he attacks is correct. Whoever takes realism, sophisticated or naive, to be fundamentally true beyond peradventure, is virtually obliged to consider its partial or complete abandonment irrational. And this in turn leads to a search for an explanation that must concentrate on inessentials, such as psychology, sociology, or whatever may be thought appropriate.

Whatever shortcomings there may be in the views of Popper (and of Lakatos, Kuhn, Feyerabend)—and it would be astonishing if there weren't any—it remains that they attempt to come to terms with developments in science that make uncritical acceptance of realism impossible. To call this irrational, as Stove does, is to assert that the developments themselves that have led to this are so. It is to assert that anything going beyond the confines of objectivity, knowledge, experience, as defined and understood in classical terms is, by this very circumstance, "beyond reason." Or, to turn the matter round, it is to assert that what has been classically set down is in essence absolutely true, thus for ever irrefutable. The consequence is almost unavoidable that anyone for whom this is not so must be in some way odd, disturbed, which is what Stove alleges Popper to be.

Yet no amount of psychological/sociological treatment touches the theoretical matters at issue. A man, psychologically disturbed owing to some great social upheaval, can none the less still work out a theory that may be correct. And whether this is so or not is not something that can be deduced from his state of health, mental or physical, or from his social milieu. It is something that has to be determined from close examination of the theory itself. And this, in this article, Stove has signally failed to do.

There is some irony in the fact that Stove has here done to Popper what earlier Popper did to Plato. This, although not without its amusing side, does not of course affect the matter. Popper's earlier error is no justification for Stove's later one.

PIERRE WATTER

Puigpunyent,
Mallorca

WHERE MY criticism of Popper goes wrong, according to Mr Watter, is in taking realism for granted. Well, I do take realism for granted. I never could take seriously those consoling cosmic ghost-stories that idealists tell. But then, this cannot possibly be the source of my disagreements with Popper, because Popper (as is well known) is a realist too.

D. C. STOVE

University of Sydney

Reply to Vargas Llosa

I AM SURPRISED that ENCOUNTER ("Intellectuals, the 'Cuban Solution' . . . and Double Standards", March) bothered to recycle one of Mario Vargas Llosa's routine diatribes against Western writers and media from the *Atlantic Monthly*. His unexplained sideswipe at me, sandwiched between slighting references to Günter Grass and *Le Monde*, may have baffled some ENCOUNTER readers, so perhaps I might be permitted to explain something of the background?

I wrote a newspaper article (*The Times*, 18 May 1983) drawing attention to the sometimes brutal and illegal methods being used by the Peruvian armed forces in their attempts to suppress a Maoist insurgency in the south-central Andean region. I was one of the first Western journalists to write on this subject. Vargas Llosa took exception to my piece, and later accused me, on a platform furnished for him by the Moonies, of being a Marxist-Leninist propagandist. Everything I said in my article has, however, been fully substantiated in reports by

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such independent bodies as Amnesty International and Americas Watch. Even Vargas Llosa no longer denies that there have been excesses in the struggle against what is undeniably a ruthless guerrilla movement.

Other journalists must speak for themselves, but I for one have no interest in slandering Peru's democratic system. I merely reported what I had heard and seen, against the background of a familiarity with Peru stretching back more than 15 years. Whether Vargas Llosa likes it or not, the emergence, survival, and indeed growth of a movement like *Sendero Luminoso* during a period of democratic government calls for extensive description and analysis. The failure of the Peruvian government to deal effectively with it, or to exercise any restraining influence on the counter-insurgency forces, reflects little credit on it, and does far more damage to the country's image than anything I or my colleagues might write.

COLIN HARDING

London

"Top Secret" Materials

WHILE I CAN APPRECIATE that there are good grounds for James Rusbridger (ENCOUNTER, May) to pick up and magnify the point I already made (*The Price of Admiralty*, Saltire Press, 1984, Vol. II, p. 623) about the failure to inform the British C-in-C, Far East, about the loss of the top secret materials on board *Automedon* and its implications for the Japanese, he displays a certain naivety about the refusal of Whitehall to release the relevant materials.

What Mr Rusbridger did not mention was the fact that the complete S.I.S. mail for Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo was among the captured materials. Are we seriously to believe that departments of state as restrictive as ours are likely to breach their own rules about releasing such evidence to the Public Record Office after only 45 years?

There is no evidence one way or the other that this material in fact survived the War anyhow, though the Cabinet paper of August 1940 was certainly retreived and not returned to the German Foreign Ministry in 1958. It is incorrect for Mr Rusbridger to claim (p. 11) that the losses were not public knowledge before 1981: the study by L.C.F. Turner et al, of 1961 in the South African War History series certainly disproves this. Since then a number of articles and books by various writers have been added to this list, some of which were incorporated in his text, but not specifically cited in footnotes.

Mr Rusbridger also remains unshakeable in his belief that a systematic cover-up continued to be perpetrated in the *Nankin* incident, but this hypothesis is no longer tenable in view of the overwhelming evidence that has come to light since 1981. There is nothing mysterious about the missing parts of the war diary of the German Naval Attaché in Japan, Admiral Wenneker, for the period June to December 1942, even though it may seem odd that the part for the period December 1942 to March 1943 has survived. NSA documents in the SRGL series already cited in my "Japan and German Naval Policy, 1919-1945", in: J. Kreiner, ed. *Deutschland-Japan Historische Kontakte* (Bonn, 1984)—supplied to Mr Rusbridger, but not cited in his article—show that all four copies of the missing parts were lost at sea by the end of 1944. Although the reading of the captured COIC texts may have provided the Japanese with much to think about with regard to communications security, there is just no evidence from original German and NSA intercept signals for this period to confirm that the Japanese believed that their fleet ciphers had been deciphered.

It transpires from the statements of Commander J. J. Rochefort USN, the chief American decipherer of Japanese naval ciphers, that at precisely the time that the Japanese Navy was expressing alarm to Admiral Wenneker (29 August 1942), the US Navy was bemoaning the fact that US marines on Guadalcanal had stumbled on a hidden Japanese Navy cipher book and had not had the presence of mind to copy the documents and return them unobserved to their hiding-place. It was for this reason that people in Washington attributed the loss of JN25 decrypts at the end of August 1942, and this appears also to be why no one in Washington was interested in the COIC material, and why no record of this event appears to have survived.

J. W. M. CHAPMAN

University of Sussex
Brighton

I AM DELIGHTED to have another opportunity of thanking Dr Chapman for his valued assistance with my article just as he has generously acknowledged my contributions to Volume II of his book. However, I must point out that, together with John Costello in New York, I began my investigations into the loss of Cabinet documents from the *Automedon* in June 1982, and was not introduced to Dr Chapman until August 1983. My article was originally written in April 1984 and I did not see a copy of Volumes II and III of Dr Chapman's book until December of that year. Accordingly, I have not "picked-up and magnified" his account of the incident, but based my account on my own inquiries.

It is equally naive to suggest that details of the *Automedon* incident have been suppressed only because the mail included SIS material, for, whatever short-term value this may have had, it was eclipsed by the Chiefs of Staff report which so dramatically affected Japanese strategic war plans (a point which Dr Chapman himself mentions on p.245 of his book).

Clearly, it was the loss of these Cabinet Minutes that has proved so sensitive, and why all reference to the affair has been kept from the Public Record Office, and even the official historian of the conflict in the Far East. If Dr Chapman believes that the story has been public knowledge for so long, then it is all the more strange that the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, and the Cabinet Office should have refused to tell me how the documents were lost, except to hint that they were passed to the Russians by Donald Maclean.

As to the *Nankin* incident, Dr Chapman and I have differing views as to the importance of the COIC mail that was captured; but it must be rememberd that until I sent Dr Chapman copies of these summaries which I had located in New Zealand, he had no idea of what the COIC mail consisted of. My conclusions have been influenced by the opinions of those who had first-hand knowledge of cryptanalysis and *Ultra* in the last War, including the late Admiral Layton USN, who expressed concern at the extent of information being distributed by COIC which he considered would indicate they had access to JN25 decrypts.

However, now that the story has had a much wider circulation, especially in the United States, it remains to be seen if memories will be jogged and fresh evidence comes to light—as has already happened in this country with the *Automedon* article.

JAMES RUSBRIDGER

St Austell
Cornwall

THE *BBC "Timewatch" programme will be showing a television documentary, based on the* ENCOUNTER *article [May, 1985], of the sinking of the* Automedon *and the capture of the secret mail, in January 1986.* ED. NOTE.

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Co-operation in Southern Africa?

His Excellency, Dr Denis Worrall, South African Ambassador to the United Kingdom, talks to Richard Rolfe, London-based international editor of **Finance Week** *of Johannesburg.*

Rolfe: Despite strained political relations, South Africa has many links with neighbouring countries throughout Southern Africa. What are the most important of these?

Worrall: Transport is most important, since the South African system carries almost half the combined total imports and exports of Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Zaïre — and incidentally SATS, the South African Transport Services, runs 15 300 route miles of railways, which is a quarter of Africa's total.

Last year almost 6 000 South African railway trucks were in use on the tracks of our neighbours on any one day. Just two months ago, so I'm told, we had loaned 35 locomotives to them. Without these links, many strategic commodities couldn't be moved. Mozambican locomotives and trucks, aircraft of its national carrier, and its fishing boats are also being repaired in South Africa.

South Africa supplies several of its neighbours with most of their electricity. But because of reduced foreign capital influx, Escom has had to increase its tariffs.

All Lesotho's and Swaziland's international telecommunications — and some of Botswana's — are routed through South Africa. There is ongoing co-operation in this field. Swazi telephone operators, for instance, have been trained in South Africa's international telephone exchanges.

South Africa provides considerable health and veterinary services to Africa, particularly doses of vaccine against tropical diseases. And we regularly send out doses of animal disease vaccine to countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi and (through agencies in Europe) to countries throughout Africa. I might add that it is common for Blacks to come from other African countries to be treated in South African hospitals.

SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN ECONOMIES

	%
Total GNP	80
Electricity generated	77
Coal mines	97
Iron ore mined	98
Chrome Mines	82
Maize grown	70
Wheat grown	87
Sugar cane produced	67
Cattle stock	39
Sheep flock	80
Motor vehicles	80
Tarred roads	63
Railways and harbours	60
Telephones installed	84

Rolfe: What about trade?

Worrall: In 1983 South African exports to Africa were R1 500m (£430m) while imports were R400m (£114m). The cumulative total of long-term credit guarantees by South Africa to African countries exceeds £100m.

One of the reasons for this is that unlike many items imported from elsewhere, South African goods and techniques are more adapted to African conditions.

Rolfe: On the one hand South Africa co-operates with its neighbours, but it also pursues military objectives against them. Doesn't this inconsistency disturb the South African government?

Worrall: Of course it disturbs the South African government and very deeply. These operations (and there have only been a few) are not directed against those countries or their governments as part of an overall military objective, but are pre-emptive strikes aimed at well identified terrorist groups using these countries as launching pads for guerrilla attacks on urban targets in the RSA. We think the inconsistency is to be found rather on the part of those who, while benefiting from South Africa's co-operation as I have described, nevertheless offer hospitality to groups intent on attacking her. Contrast this with Mozambique. South Africa was prepared to sign the Nkomati Accord and thereby establish a *modus vivendi* with a Marxist state. I should add in this context that South Africa has repeatedly offered to sign non-aggression pacts with all her neighbours.

Rolfe: Despite unrest and other internal problems, migrant labour still comes into South Africa. What effect does it have?

Worrall: Including illegal immigrants, South Africa provides employment for about 1.5m foreigners from our neighbouring states, excluding the TBVC countries. About half of their cumulative income earned in South Africa is sent home and is enough to make up a large proportion of the GNP of Swaziland, Botswana and Mozambique. It usually accounts for over 50% of Lesotho's GNP, for instance. Put another way, for every Lesotho citizen working in his own country, six are employed in South Africa.

Rolfe: Does South Africa export food to neighbouring countries?

Worrall: Except in times of exceptional drought, South Africa is one of the few food exporting countries in the world. In both 1980 and 1981, food exports to Africa amounted to over R1 000m (about £300m); the worst drought for decades subsequently affected this figure but has now largely broken and food exports should return to their previous levels. South Africa has for decades provided emergency grants of food aid to its neighbours. In the present financial year 225 tons of milk powder, 150 tons of potatoes and other foodstuffs are being made available to countries in Southern Africa.

Rolfe: What is the purpose of having a Customs Union in the region?

Worrall: It provides for a common internal tariff and makes possible the free interchange of goods between the member states, which in turn assists in the continued economic development of the area as a whole and the economic diversification of the less advanced members. It also means that all parties can share equitably in the benefits arising from reciprocal trade. The frequent meetings of the governments concerned also assist in building up a constructive relationship.

The Customs Union is a very significant source of income for the smaller countries, representing 32% (Botswana), 37% (Lesotho) and 61% (Swaziland) of their total revenue in the 1982/3 financial year.

Rolfe: Summing up, what have been the trends in regional relations — warts and all? Does your government think they have been improving or worsening?

Worrall: Despite some animosity and sporadic setbacks, relations on the ground are ongoing and, we believe, steadily improving due to an increased realism on the part of all concerned. The changing scene in South Africa shows that new realisms are breaking through there, too. The countries of the region are very much aware of the positive changes that are taking place in South Africa.

There is still going to be plenty of trial and travail but hopefully a Southern Africa where all can build a secure future will not elude us.

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Life & Letters Today

London

CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE: **If you are the victim of a "Conspiracy of Silence" you are convinced—often wrongly—that your friends or associates are trying to keep a secret from you. The expression was first used in Victorian times by a poet named Sir Lewis Morris. In truth he was not very good, but he wanted to become Poet Laureate. He complained to writer Oscar Wilde, that people were jealous of him and so refused to discuss his poetry.**

"There is a conspiracy of silence against me. What shall I do?" he asked.

Oscar replied: "Join it."

DAILY MAIL

Grasmere

GRAFFITI: *Lake District rangers are battling to shift 14 unwelcome "visitors" from the heart of the National Park. Water and now fire have been used to try to evict the figures from Dunmail Raise near Grasmere. They are hangers-on from a ceremony to commemorate the dropping of the Hiroshima Bomb 40 years ago.*

The figures were daubed in white paint on roadside rock faces to symbolise victims of the Bomb. The white shadows have resisted the most drastic removal methods and two men from the ranger's staff have been forced to resort to blow-lamps.

Park Chief John Toothill says that some people passing the men as they went about their task have called to them to leave the figures alone.

He said he was distressed to see the disfigurement of the rock faces and denied that the National Park Authority was expressing a political view by removing the paint.

THE WESTMORLAND GAZETTE

Kampala

BLOODY BOOKS: *A bullet-ridden tin hut in a Kampala front garden bears the most convincing evidence yet of a massacre of members of the victorious Acholi tribe by President Obote's bodyguards once they knew the coup against him had succeeded. Blood on the floor and walls of the hut and many spent cartridges leave little doubt that it served as a "death cell."*

The house behind the hut was Dr Obote's private armoury. Ten lorry-loads of guns, ammunition and grenades were driven away after the coup and the patio is littered with live rounds.

The hut is a gruesome sight, as is the garden, littered with spent and live ammunition and Obote campaign badges and crowned by the wreck of the former President's yellow Mercedes. Paper cups and plates still in plastic wrappers dot the lawn and a Bible presented to Dr Obote by grateful Ugandans after the overthrow of Idi Amin lies open.

In his home next door, looters have removed what they could carry and wrecked the rest.

Almost the only things shunned by the looters were in Dr Obote's ground-floor library, the works of Marx, Lenin, Brezhnev and Kim Il Sung.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Horsham

ANGLO-SAX APPEAL: *The BBC has been blasted by West Sussex county councillors over poor radio reception in the county.*

The cost of a new £250,000 radio transmitter needed by the county would probably be less than the "Beeb" had saved when it failed to buy a new series of "Dallas."

"We are not talking about a remote moorland area of Scotland but about a highly populated area within 60 miles of the nation's capital."

If Sussex, the Kingdom of the South Saxons, had evolved its own language or national identity, it would have its own TV station and language broadcasts.

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES

Brighton

OPPOSITES: **A motorist in Brighton is making no secret of his feelings about the TUC Congress beginning there on Monday. A sticker in his rear window asks: "If pro is the opposite of con, what is the opposite of progress?"**

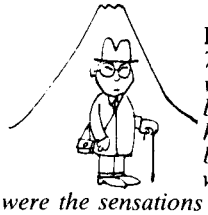
DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

HONOUR-BOUND: **The latest hearty welcome being proferred by the left-wing Greater London Council is to Sado-Masochists. Valerie Wise, chair of the women's committee, has decided that the boys in black leather should be allowed to use the council's Lesbian and Gay Centre—despite the protests of a group called "Lesbians in Education." They wrote to her saying the S & M crowd would put off "Black and Jewish lesbians, lesbians with disabilities and lesbian mothers" from using the centre. Ms Wise has written back saying unless there is clear evidence that the S & M group promotes "racist, sexist or handicappist practices", her hands—so to speak—are tied.**

THE TIMES

Tokyo



BARD ON MT. FUJI: *Akira Kurosawa, 74, Japan's greatest film-maker, is at work again: and this time there is a bonus for all of us in the West who first had our eyes snapped open to the barbaric aestheticism of the Far East when* **Rashomon** *and* **Seven Samurai** *were the sensations of the early 1950s [Alexander Walker writes]. This time around. Kurosawa has taken his epic bearings from one of the greatest plays of Shakespeare—* **King Lear.** *This is what he is shooting on Mount Fuji.*

Kurosawa sorts out the chaos—indeed **Chaos** *(or* **Ran** *in Japanese) will be the English title for this free version of* **Lear**, *which he's had in his mind for over ten years.*

Perhaps the most striking break with Shakespeare's play is Kurosawa's invention of a moral basis for Lear's downfall. Shakespeare simply put it down to pride—Lear believing no god would dare defy his wish. Kurosawa, however, makes us realise that his Great Lord didn't get to the top by kindness—but by crimes against humanity that now return to curse him and destroy him.

The big change Kurosawa has made in the **Lear** *text is a gender switch: Lear's three daughters are now three sons—"much more in the Japanese tradition."*

BA HIGH LIFE

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